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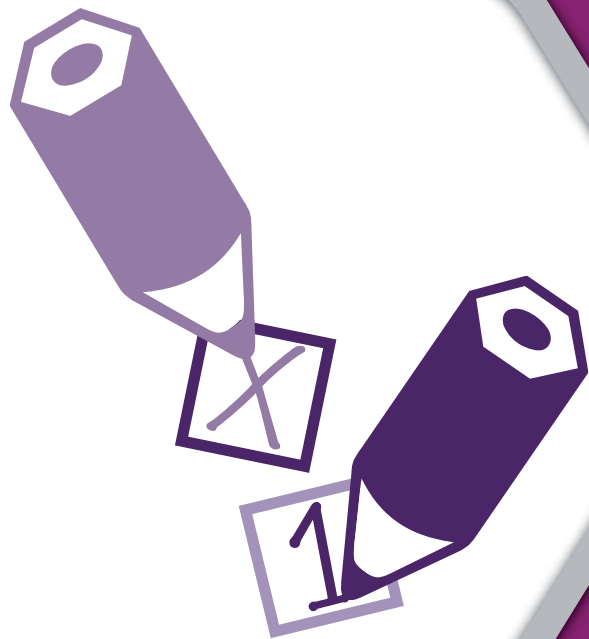
Making your mark

Good practice for designing voter materials: guidance for electoral administrators

Translations and other formats

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Contents

1

Introduction

Over 46 million people are registered to vote in elections in the UK.[1] Voters should be able to 'make their mark' easily and confidently, knowing that their vote will be counted in the way they intended. Ballot papers and other voter materials should not create barriers to that.

Poorly-designed voter materials can contribute to ballot papers being rejected, cause voter confusion and ultimately, lead to the outcome of the election not being a true reflection of the electorate's choice. It is important to remember that:

An election is not held to test voters' ability to follow instructions, but to receive instructions from the voters as to which candidates they will elect. No legitimate public purpose is served by designs that distort those instructions.

The Brennan Center for Justice[2]

This guidance is intended for use by anyone involved in designing or producing voter materials used at elections and referendums held across the UK. It is aimed at people who are already familiar with elections in the UK, and with the law and practice surrounding the design and production of voter materials. The guidance covers:

- ballot papers
- guidance to voters in polling stations
- instructions to voters in polling booths
- postal voting statements and declarations of identity
- supplementary postal voting guidance

[1] Figure given is for electors registered for local government elections in the UK as at 1 December 2008.

[2] Report available at www.brennancenter.org/content/resource/better_ballots/

The guidance sets out how voter materials used at elections and referendums across the UK should be designed, accepting the constraints of existing legislation.[3] It applies to the design of materials, or parts of materials, over which Returning Officers have discretion, or materials which are not prescribed.

About user-focused design

This guidance is based on the principles of usability and accessibility, which means putting the needs of the voter first. The guidance has been developed on the basis of inclusive design. Inclusive design is defined as:

The design of mainstream products and/or services that are accessible to, and usable by, as many people as reasonably possible ... without the need for special adaptation or specialised design.

The British Standards Institute (2005)[4]

Therefore there are no references in the guidance to producing documents in different versions, or tailoring them to particular audiences, although where something is particularly helpful to a certain group of people, this is explained. Instead of separately addressing the needs of different groups, for example people who have low literacy, or disabled voters, the guidance contains good practice in making design as inclusive as possible for all voters.

Understanding your audience

While voting may seem straightforward to people who work with elections and understand how voting systems work, others can find it difficult, daunting and even intimidating. Thinking about the voter, and what their needs are, will help you to design documents that are inclusive and user-friendly. This does not mean you are 'dumbing down'. It does not reduce the level or quality of the service you provide, and it does not make you seem unprofessional. In fact, producing clear, simple documents is not easy, but if you get it right, you will make a positive impression. Even small changes, such as using a font size that is easy to read, can make a big difference to voters.

[3] There is also a version of the guidance for government policy-makers considering the future design of voter materials.

[4] British Standard 7000-6:2005. *Design management systems. Managing inclusive design. Guide.*

The right to vote is universal, and the electorate spans from people who are very comfortable reading, following instructions, and completing written documents, to people who will struggle to do so. There are many adults who have low levels of literacy, and so may struggle to read and, more importantly, understand information on unfamiliar topics. Around 16%, or 5.2 million, of 16 to 65-year-olds in England have literacy levels that mean they would not pass an English GCSE. Of those, 3.5 million have literacy levels at or below those expected of an 11-year-old.[5] In addition, at every election there will be people who have never voted before, people who may not have voted using that particular voting system before, or people for whom English is not their first language.

All of these factors emphasise the importance of making the voting process as straightforward and accessible as possible. People will favour experience, familiarity, and ease. The design of voter materials needs to accommodate this, and where possible, follow standard rules and systems that people use and follow in everyday tasks to making voting as accessible to the largest number of people.

[5] Figures from the National Literacy Trust:

www.literacytrust.org.uk/database/stats/adultstats.html

Source: Department for Education and Skills (2003) *National needs and impact survey of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.*

About this guidance

Our aim

The aim of this guidance is to improve the usability and accessibility of voter materials, by considering voters' needs, so that voters can be confident that they have voted the way they intended to, and that their vote will be counted. The guidance should also help to bring greater consistency to the design of materials used across the UK, so that voters have a similarly good experience wherever they are voting.

We hope that it will:

- Help electoral administrators to produce voter materials that meet legislative requirements, carry out the function of the material effectively, and are accessible and usable.

- Demonstrate to policy-makers the need to include user-focused design as a key consideration in the development of electoral policy and law.

- Encourage changes and developments in electoral law and policy to ensure voter materials for use at elections and referendums are usable and accessible.

There is no easy solution to designing voter materials. The circumstances of each election vary, including the number of candidates or parties standing, the body or office being elected to, the number of seats being elected to, and whether or not the election is combined with another election. These variations affect the requirements of electoral stationery, which makes it impossible to take a 'one size fits all' approach.

What we have tried to do is to give you guidance to help you make good decisions about designs, whether produced in-house or externally, and identify the things you should consider when making those decisions. The guidance does not attempt to define, for example, what the 'perfect' ballot paper size is, nor does it cover every element of every document. It concentrates both on

the general principles of good, user-friendly design, and on how these should be applied specifically to individual voter materials.

Although the guidance does not cover all materials a voter may have to use in relation to elections and referendums, much of the good practice it contains can be applied to other materials, such as registration forms and poll cards.

The guidance is not compulsory. However, it is what we recommend as good practice, and it should be followed where possible. It may be that you are not able to follow the guidance in full, all the time. We appreciate that, for instance, colour printing is more expensive than black and white. But we encourage you to try and adopt the best practice in the guidance as much as possible, and always think about how you can put the voter first when you are designing and producing voter materials.

Using this guidance

This guidance does not replace or supersede any existing requirements, statutory or non-statutory, for Returning Officers to produce materials in accessible formats.

Organisation and structure

This guidance is for people designing or producing voter materials within the context of existing legislation (at the time of publication). It is intended to apply to the design of documents, or parts of documents, over which there is some discretion, or documents that are not prescribed.[6]

Terms used in this guidance

Where the guidance refers to voting for a candidate or party, this means voting for one, or more than one candidate or party, depending on the electoral system in use.

[6] Our version of the guidance for government policy-makers contains both the guidance in this version, and also the parts of the guidance that are recommendations for improvements, but which cannot be implemented without legislative change.

Symbols used in this guidance

🔍 Indicates a link to another section of the guidance.

ⓘ Indicates an explanation of the preceding text.

❓ Indicates a link to detailed guidance giving a fuller explanation of the subject.

⚠ Indicates information to be noted by the reader.

Contents

Section 1

An introduction to the guidance, including a background to the principles behind it.

🔍 Section 1

Section 2

'About this guidance', which explains the purpose of the guidance and how to use it.

🔍 Section 2

Section 3

General guidance on design considerations that applies to all materials, and should be read first, as context for the rest of the guidance. It covers style, and content and structure.

🔍 Section 3

Section 4

Deals with each type of voter material, covering the function, style, and where applicable, content and structure of:

- ballot papers
- polling station notices
- polling booth notices
- postal voting guidance
- postal voting statements (Great Britain)
- declarations of identity (Northern Ireland)

🔍 Section 4

Section 5

Guidance for bilingual (English and Welsh) materials, covering style, and content and structure.

🔍 Section 5

Section 6

Contains detailed guidance relating to specific features of design. This is cross-referenced from Sections 3, 4 and 5 of the guidance. In Section 6, we have collated existing good practice from professional organisations and provided links to further references and resources.

🔍 Section 6

This section covers:

- adding emphasis
- choosing a font
- text layout and alignment
- colour and contrast
- writing in plain language

Appendix 1

Contains a design checklist that you can use to assess the design of your materials.

Appendix 2

Contains examples of voter materials, to show how the guidance could be applied to prescribed forms in practice. The example materials are based on existing prescribed forms which would be used at a UK Parliamentary general election. There is also a colour palette showing the colours used in the example designs.

The example materials are:

- polling station notice (English)
- polling station notice (bilingual)[7]
- polling booth notice (English)
- polling booth notice (bilingual)
- postal voting 'quick-start' guide (in five variants)[8]
- postal voting statement (English)
- postal voting statement (bilingual)
- declaration of identity (Northern Ireland) (English)

You can use these examples as a guide, when designing and producing your own materials for use at elections, or to help you when commissioning materials from an external supplier. The example materials can also be downloaded from the Do Politics Centre on our website at www.dopolitics.org.uk

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[7] Bilingual refers to documents in English and Welsh.

[8] First-past-the post election, Great Britain (English); first-past-the-post election, Great Britain (bilingual); first-past-the-post election, Northern Ireland; single transferable vote election, Scotland; single transferable vote election, Northern Ireland.

Section 3

3

General design considerations

- Think about the appearance of voter materials: aim for a simple, clear and uncluttered look.

- Try to balance text and pictures (if you are using pictures).

- Avoid very long blocks of text. Use space to break up the content into smaller, manageable sections.

3A

Style

- All voter materials should have a consistent style, so that they look like part of a set.

- Content should be consistent across all materials. Use a universal 'language' throughout (wording and phrasing, instructions, terminology, pictures, colour-coding, text sizing, etc.).

ⓘ **Explanation**

- This helps the voter identify which documents they need to look at and to recognise them. Consistency of style also helps the voter to become familiar with the process being described to them, and with how information is being communicated.

Font

Use the same font style (typeface) throughout all voter materials, for consistency.

- Use a sans-serif font, as these are generally plainer and therefore more accessible for the reader. Sans-serif fonts, such as the one used within this guidance,[9] do not have 'serifs', the small features at the end of strokes. Serif fonts do have these features, e.g. Times New Roman.

- Avoid decorative fonts.

- The font should be clear and readable – both close-up, in smaller point sizes, and also when printed in a large point size (e.g. on a notice).

- For materials the voter has to complete, or read close-up, (e.g. the ballot paper and any postal voting materials) use 14 point if possible. If size restrictions mean this is not possible, use a minimum of 12 point.

- Try to make sure that the size of your document allows for a readable font size to be used. If possible, use a larger document size rather than reducing the text size.

- For notices, or anything displayed in a poster format, use a minimum of 26 point.

  Note: these point sizes refer to fonts with a similar size to Arial. Some fonts are in themselves smaller than Arial in the same point sizes. Use a font size equivalent to those given for Arial.

> ⓘ **Explanation**
>
> - Any written communication needs to readable for it to be successful.
>
> - Anything that will be displayed at a distance needs to be large enough to be read at a distance. Remember to keep letters and spacing in proportion.
>
> - Anything that will be read close-up needs to be written in a large enough font so that it can be read easily. Take account of the fact that many people have sight or cognitive difficulties and find small text difficult to distinguish and read (and often intimidating).

[9] This guidance document is printed in Helvetica. It is very similar to Arial, the font which is commonly available in PC programmes.

Text case

- Use the appropriate case for text:

  - Sentence case for most writing, including titles and headings. The first letter of the first word is a capital, the rest are lower case.

  - Title case for individual words that are names (e.g. European Parliament). The first letter of each word is capitalised.

  - Avoid ALL CAPITALS for continuous text, although capitals are fine for one or two words. Be careful when you use capitals, and what you use them for, as they can look like SHOUTING.

> ⓘ **Explanation**
>
> - People read by recognising the size and shape of words, rather than individual letters. Text written in all capital letters is hard to read – each word looks like a block and this makes it hard for the reader to visually recognise the word.

Alignment

- All text should be:

  - left-aligned, so that each line starts at the left-hand edge of the page or column, and they are all lined up; and

  - 'ragged right', not lined up at the right hand edge

- Avoid hyphenating words at the end of a line.

- Avoid writing long sentences (as a guide, aim for an average of 15–20 words). Try to make just one or two points per sentence. If your sentence needs to be longer, consider breaking it up using bulleted lists.

- Be aware of where sentences begin on the page. Do not start a new sentence at the end of a line (i.e. only one or two words on the line, with the rest on the next line) if this will interrupt its flow, or make it harder to understand. For example:

These sentences are broken up and hard to follow:

> Go to one of the compartments. Number the candidates in order of preference, putting '1' against the candidate of your 1st preference, '2' against your 2nd preference and so on.

These are aligned so that pieces of information are kept together, making it easier to follow:

Go to one of the compartments.
Number the candidates in order of preference, putting
'1' against the candidate of your 1st preference,
'2' against your 2nd preference and so on.

ⓘ Explanation

- Left and ragged right alignment of text means that the spacing between words is equal, rather than the text being spread out (justified) to fill the space. Having even spacing between words makes it easier to read. People tend to read by recognising whole words or groups of words, rather than letters. Evenly spaced text helps the eye to track along the line.

- Left-aligning text makes it easy for the reader to find the start of the line, unlike centred text, which can be harder to read.

- Starting a new sentence at the end of a line makes it harder to follow, as the sentence gets broken up.

- If a sentence is too long, or has too many points, it is difficult for the reader to take in all the information. People are more likely to absorb things when they are told them one at a time.

Spacing

- There is no single rule about spacing as it depends on the typeface and font size. In general, space between letters should be less than word space, and word space less than the space between lines.

- Leave a space between paragraphs, and between each row (of candidates or parties) on ballot papers. The paragraph space should be more than the line space.

ⓘ Explanation

- Having blank space between different sections and areas of a document makes it easier to read. Blank space helps to break up a document into smaller, manageable chunks, as well as identifying different sections.

- Be careful not to have too much space that might confuse the voter and make them think they need to write something in it. There is further guidance in Section 4A on ballot papers.

🔍 Ballot papers (Section 4A)

11

Emphasis

- Emphasise key information so that it stands out from the rest of the text. Use bold for highlighting, and different text sizes to distinguish between different types of information.

Colour and contrast

- Think about contrast (both colour contrast and brightness) when choosing the colour for the paper, the background, and text.

- Generally you should use dark text on a pale background and avoid vivid background colours.

> ### ⓘ Explanation
>
> - Having the right contrast of colour and brightness is key to making text legible, particularly for people with sight problems.

Paper quality

- Paper should not be glossy, as this can create glare.

- Paper for documents that voters are going to use (i.e. ballot papers, postal voting materials) should be of a good quality and weight so that they can be easily marked, without the print or mark showing through to the other side.

> ### ⓘ Explanation
>
> - Glare can make it difficult to read a document, particularly for people with sight difficulties.
> - Good quality paper gives a professional feel. Flimsy paper can seem unofficial or even get overlooked by postal voters.

Layout of text

- Break up longer sections of text using lists.

- Use bullet points for each item in a list, or for each separate piece of information. Keep each bulleted point no longer than a couple of sentences.

- For a list of instructions, use numbers instead of bullet points (unless there is only one instruction).

- Take care with instructions that involve the voter marking numbers on the ballot paper. In this case, make sure that the numbers of the instructions are not next to numbers in the instructions. You may want to consider an alternative, such as (lower case) letters, or bullet points.

  - Have only one task, or one part of a task, per numbered step.

  - Put the instructions in a logical order, following the steps of the process exactly.

Language: tone

- Write in a polite and friendly way. Be careful not to sound officious or formal, and do not use threatening language.

Language: style

- Be direct and use the affirmative voice, e.g. 'Do this, write this, tell us…' Use 'please' in front of the instruction to avoid sounding rude or abrupt.

- Use personal language e.g. 'we', 'you', rather than 'the council', 'the voter'.

- Try to phrase instructions so that they say what to do, rather than what not to do.

- Put the choice before the action, e.g. 'If you need help, please speak to a member of staff'.

- Write in short, simple sentences.

> **ⓘ Explanation**
>
> - Being direct makes it clear what the voter has to do, and helps to keep text concise.
>
> - Only saying what the voter should do avoids the potential for confusion or the voter following the wrong instruction, especially if they are reading quickly or just glancing at instructions for reference.
>
> - Putting the choice before the action means the reader can choose whether or not to do it. If the action comes first the reader may just follow it regardless.

Plain language

- Be concise and use familiar, everyday language. Avoid technical and legal terms, and jargon that would not be understood by someone unfamiliar with elections. Explain any unfamiliar terms, or everyday words used as technical terms.

- Use words that accurately and precisely describe things and actions.

> **ⓘ Explanation**
>
> - People find plain language easier to read and understand. They recognise key words and are less intimidated by familiar language.
>
> - Being concise also means you are more likely to be able to fit the information in the space without it being cramped, using a larger font.
>
> - Being precise avoids potential confusion or misinterpretation of instructions.

Language: consistency

- Use consistent language throughout all voter materials.

> ⓘ **Explanation**
>
> - Using consistent language helps the voter become familiar with the words being used, and what they mean. Using different words to refer to the same thing is confusing (e.g. 'postal voting statement' and 'mailer').

Pictures

- If using pictures, choose clear, simple ones. Use one picture per instruction.

- Ensure the picture:

  - is an accurate representation of the item or action it is illustrating (e.g. an actual ballot paper that will be used at that election); and

  - fits with the context of that particular election

- Avoid pictures of ballot papers that show a vote for a particular candidate or party. Instead, show a picture of a real, but unmarked ballot paper.

- For pictorial instructions, the number of pictures should match the number of steps in the written instructions.

- Use numbers to refer to each pictured instruction and ensure that they match the written instructions.

- Put pictures with, or near, the text they relate to.

- Do not put text over the picture, and make sure the text is still aligned on the left hand side, rather than following the shape of the picture.

- For postal voting guidance, include some brief text with the pictorial instructions to say what they represent.

- Use pictures that represent real life, rather than cartoons.

3B

Content and structure

- All voter materials should have a title to identify what they are, and what the election is.

> **ⓘ Explanation**
>
> - A title identifies what a document is, and shows that it belongs to an election. This helps the voter know that it is relevant to the election, and reminds them what they are voting for. This is especially important at elections that are combined, or have more than one ballot paper.

- Provide information and instructions at the relevant stage of the process, rather than all together.

> **ⓘ Explanation**
>
> - Giving information at the relevant stage means that people have the information and instructions when they need them, and do not have to look for them elsewhere, or remember them from before.
> - If all of the information is put together, people will not read or absorb it.

- Make clear which voting system is in use, and how it works.

  - **Do not assume familiarity** – many people will be new to voting. You should not encourage people to rely on their past experience as that may not be relevant to this election, or correct.

  - **Do not rely on the voter's knowledge of other voting systems** to explain how to mark their vote, (e.g. 'instead of using an X, use numbers…'). This is confusing and does not help people who have not voted recently, or have not voted using either system before.

- Avoid duplicating information unnecessarily. Only give the same information again if it is something that the voter needs to be reminded of (e.g. how to get help). Put all relevant information together so it does not need to be repeated in other places.

> ⓘ **Explanation**
>
> - Grouping information together means the voter has the information they need, when they need it, and they do not have to refer to several different sources of information.
> - Duplicating information can be confusing – the voter may think they need to do something more than once, or repeat something they have already done.

- Use specific instructions tailored to each particular election. Do not use generic terms such as 'ballot paper(s)' and 'vote(s)'.

> ⓘ **Explanation**
>
> - Instructions should be specific. Using (s) makes them ambiguous – the voter does not know whether there are one or more ballot papers, or one or more votes.

> **Note:** if wording in legislation uses square brackets, e.g. vote[s], this means you can use the word 'vote' or 'votes'. You do not need to print it with the square brackets.

Voter materials

4A

Ballot papers

Function

The function of the ballot paper is to enable the voter to indicate their chosen candidate or party at an election.

To do this, the ballot paper needs to be designed in a way that makes it easy for the voter to:

- understand what the ballot paper is for

- find their chosen candidate or party

- mark their choice in such a way that their vote is valid, and reflects their intention

It should also be designed in a way that means the voter's choice can be clearly identified when the votes are counted.

Style

- The longest line of text will be the main factor that determines the overall width of the rows, and therefore will also determine the width of the ballot paper.

- There is a blank space in the right-hand half of the row between the end of the text and the logo.

- As a minimum, this space should be equal to the width of the logo.

- Ideally, there should be more text than blank space on the row. However the longest line of text will determine the width of the rows, which may mean in practice that there are some rows which have more blank space than text.

- You might need to alter the width of the paper to keep the spacing in the right proportions. The width of the margin at the right and left edges of the page can also be adjusted if necessary (though avoid having a very large margin).

- If there is no logo, treat the row as if there is one, for consistency, i.e. leave an equivalent space (unless none of the candidates are using a logo).

> ⓘ **Explanation**
>
> - Keeping the logo and voting box close to candidate or party information maintains the link between them. This helps the voter to find the voting box for the candidate or party of their choice and to put their mark in the correct place.

4B

Polling station notices

Function

'Guidance to voters' notices, which explain the voting process, are displayed inside and outside polling stations in the UK on polling day. These are referred to in this guidance as 'polling station notices'.

The function of the polling station notice is to give the voter information about the election and voting, and to tell them how to mark their vote on the ballot paper.

To do this, the notice needs to:

- stand out and attract attention
- say what it is for, and tell the voter why they should read it
- be easy to read, understand and follow

Example polling station notices (Appendix 2)

Style

- Print in A2 size. If this is not possible, use a minimum size of A3.

> *i* **Explanation**
>
> - Polling station notices need to attract attention (especially as there are likely to be other posters on display unrelated to the election) and need to be easily read at a distance.
> - A2 size allows for text to be in a large enough font size to be easily read.

- Consider using colour:
  - for pictures
  - for creating and defining blocks or sections of information
  - for colour-coding information
  - to reflect the colour of the ballot paper

Detailed guidance: Colour and contrast (Section 6D)

> ### ⓘ Explanation
>
> - Colour makes notices visually appealing, professional and less austere than just monochrome (black and white).
>
> - Colour blocking helps to distinguish separate sections of information.

- Emphasise the title of the notice so it stands out and attracts attention.

❓ Detailed guidance: Adding emphasis (Section 6A)

> ### ⓘ Explanation
>
> - Emphasising the title makes the notice stand out, so voters are more likely to see and read it.
>
> - This is especially useful if the polling station already has lots of posters not related to the election, e.g. a school hall.

4C

Polling booth notices

Function

'Instructions to voters' notices are displayed inside each polling booth at an election. They are referred to in this guidance as 'polling booth notices'.

The function of the polling booth notice is to provide information to help the voter when they are in the polling booth, while they are voting, including information on how to mark the ballot paper.

🔍 Example polling booth notices (Appendix 2)

To do this, the notice needs to be clear, and easy to read, understand and follow. There is less of a need to make it stand out from other materials, as it is the only item displayed in the polling booth. However, it still needs to be visually appealing and say what it is, to attract attention and make sure that the voter reads it.

Style

- Print in a minimum A3 size.

> ⓘ **Explanation**
>
> - Allows for text to be in a large enough font size to be easily read, and space for pictures.

- Make use of the space to separate blocks of text.

> ⓘ **Explanation**
>
> - Blank space helps to break up the notice into smaller, manageable chunks, and identify different sections.
> - Spacing also helps the notice to look less cluttered and easier to read.

- Consider using colour for:
  - creating and defining blocks or sections of information
  - colour-coding information

> **ⓘ Explanation**
> - Colour makes notices visually appealing, professional and less austere than just monochrome.
> - Colour blocking helps to distinguish separate pieces of information.

- Format the title of the notice to add emphasis, so that it stands out and attracts attention.

> **ⓘ Explanation**
> - Emphasising the title of the notice makes it stand out, so voters are more likely to see and read it.
> - Use large, bold font (though not all capitals).

Content and structure

- At combined elections, have a separate notice for each election (displayed side-by-side if possible).

- Consider using colour-coding on each notice that links to the colour of the ballot paper.

> **ⓘ Explanation**
> - Having information about each election on a separate notice helps to distinguish between the two, to avoid confusing the voter. This is especially useful if there are different voting systems in use. It also means you do not have to try and fit a lot of information into one notice.
> - Colour-coding the notices helps link each notice to the corresponding ballot paper.

- At elections that have more than one ballot paper, have a separate notice for each ballot paper (displayed side-by-side, if possible).

- Consider using colour-coding on each notice that links to the colour of the ballot paper.

> ⓘ **Explanation**
>
> - Having information about each election on a separate notice helps to distinguish between the ballot papers, and explains why they have more than one, to avoid confusing the voter.
>
> - Having separate notices is especially useful if there are different voting systems in use. The notice will need to explain how the voter marks their vote, and having all of this information together on one notice could cause confusion. It also means you do not have to try and fit a lot of information into one page.
>
> - Colour-coding the notices helps link each notice to the corresponding ballot paper.

4D

Postal voting guidance

Function

Postal voting can be a complex process, involving at least two documents the voter must complete, plus two envelopes in which to enclose and return the documents. Postal voters therefore need guidance to explain the process, just as polling station voters have notices in polling stations and booths to guide them.

Style

The general style guidance in Section 3A should be followed when producing guidance for postal voters.

Content and structure

- Include a 'quick-start' guide with the postal voting pack to summarise what is in the pack and the main things the voter needs to do, and when.

> **ⓘ Explanation**
>
> - A 'quick-start' guide is more likely to be read than more detailed information (think of manuals that come with electrical goods). A 'quick-start' guide gives the voter an easy way of finding out what is in the pack, what each document is for, and what they need to do.
>
> - The guide will also help the voter to know where to start the postal voting process, i.e. what they should do first. It is a good place to put extra information that may not be suitable for the voter materials themselves.
>
> - In polling stations, notices are displayed to guide voters through the voting process. A 'quick-start' guide can do the same for postal voters.
>
> - Avoid including too much detailed information – it should be a brief reference guide.

- Use specific postal voting materials for proxy voters, and for voters who have been granted a signature waiver, which are different to those for other postal voters.

> **ⓘ Explanation**
>
> - Using specific materials for different groups of voters allows the instructions and content to be tailored to the person voting, and their requirements. For example, a voter who has been granted a signature waiver will not need a signature box, or instructions about providing their signature.
>
> - Using specific materials tailored to the person voting means you do not have to include instructions for all circumstances on every postal voting statement, and helps to avoid instructions being ambiguous. References to different processes for proxy and waiver voting can confuse other voters, who are not familiar with those terms and do not know what they mean, or whether they apply to them.

- Provide pictorial guidance on a separate sheet, so the voter can refer to it as the same time as the postal voting statement/ declaration of identity. Do not put it on the back of the statement. Ensure that any labelling or numbering corresponds with what is used in the written instructions.

> **ⓘ Explanation**
>
> - Having pictorial guidance on a separate sheet makes it easier to use. This means the voter has more help available to them and therefore a better chance of completing the process correctly.

- Make sure that instructions and guidance are visible to the voter throughout the process of completing their postal vote, and are not obscured at any stage (e.g. during the process of folding the documents and putting them into the relevant envelopes).

> **ⓘ Explanation**
>
> - The voter needs to be able to see the instructions and guidance in order to follow them correctly, and to be able to check that they are doing the right thing. This also gives reassurance and reduces the likelihood of them making a mistake.

- For both written and pictorial guidance, put instructions in order vertically, in portrait layout, not horizontally, in landscape layout. There should be one 'column' of instructions which flows from top to bottom. Consider using arrows to indicate the flow and direct the reader from one to the next.

> ⓘ **Explanation**
>
> - A vertical order makes the instructions easier to follow, as there is no ambiguity about what order they go in. With a horizontal (landscape) layout, the order could be down or across, or both, which can be confusing.

- Include a checklist of things the voter should have done before they return their vote:

  - Put it either on envelope B, or in the 'quick-start' guide, or somewhere else where it is clearly visible.

  - Do not put it on one of the documents that needs to be returned inside envelope B, as then it will not be visible to the voter when they are about to return their vote.

> ⓘ **Explanation**
>
> - A checklist acts as an easy reference for the voter and helps to make sure they send everything back, and do not miss out any of the documents that they need to return for their vote to count.

4E

Postal voting statements (Great Britain)

Function

Postal voters in Great Britain have to complete a postal voting statement and return it along with their ballot paper for their vote to be counted.

Postal voting materials have several functions – to enable the voter to vote on the ballot paper, to obtain the voter's personal identifiers (their date of birth and signature), and to enable the voter to return their vote in time for it to be counted.

Because voting by post is relatively complex, involving at least two documents the voter must complete, plus two envelopes in which to enclose and return the documents, it is crucial that the materials provide clear, simple instructions, which are easy to follow, and that the documents themselves are similarly clear and simple to use. Postal voting is often used by people who would experience particular barriers to voting, and feel it is easier to vote at home. Postal voting should not be more difficult than voting in a polling station and the process itself should not act as a barrier to the voter.

Example postal voting statements (Appendix 2)

Style

- Print the statement in A4 size.

> ⓘ **Explanation**
>
> - A4 size allows for text to be in a large enough font size to be easily read, with enough space to lay out the information clearly, and enough room for the sections that have to be filled in.

- Give each separate section of the document a heading.

- Make it clear which sections of the statement the voter needs to complete, and what with (i.e. date of birth, not the date that they signed it), and make them stand out:

  - Use bold lines to highlight boxes.

  - Use arrows to signpost the boxes that need to be filled in.

  - Put a label next to the box to say what should go in it.

  - Avoid using 'DD/MM/YYYY' labels. Use the full words: 'day', 'month', 'year'.

- Ensure the signature box is large enough to accommodate long or large signatures.

- Put a solid border around the signature box so that it is clear what space the voter has to keep inside. A pale grey or thin line is not easy to see.

Content and structure

- In the written information and instructions, include information about deadlines and timescales (e.g. when talking about getting a replacement ballot paper, or returning your vote). Include:

  - when each deadline is

  - what to do if you have missed the deadline, or think you might miss it

Include information about what to do if you make a mistake or need another postal voting statement or ballot paper. The information should:

- be prominent, and included early on in the postal voting statement

- be repeated or referred to at other key points where the voter may need help or assistance

- include information about call costs if help is available by telephone

> ⓘ **Explanation**
>
> - It should be clear to the voter from the outset that they can get help if they need it, and how to do so, so that they are not put off completing and returning their vote if they get stuck.
>
> - Many people will be on their own without access to someone to help them. Making it clear that help is available reassures the voter and encourages them to seek assistance if they need it, and avoids them having to struggle unnecessarily.
>
> - People want to know how much a telephone number costs before they ring it – they may be put off if it is not a free phone or local rate number.

- Put the signature box as the last task the voter has to complete.

> ⓘ **Explanation**
>
> - Having the signature last fits with the usual way of completing a form. People think when they have signed, they have finished, and will stop. Anything they need to complete on the statement should come before this.

4F

Declarations of identity (Northern Ireland)

Function

Postal voters in Northern Ireland have to complete a declaration of identity and return it along with their ballot paper for their vote to be counted. The voter must complete their declaration of identity in the presence of a witness, who must then complete the witness declaration section on the same document.

Postal voting materials have several functions: to enable the voter to vote on the ballot paper; to obtain the voter's personal identifiers and witness's details; and to enable the voter to return their vote in time for it to be counted.

Because voting by post is relatively complex, involving at least two documents the voter must complete, plus two envelopes in which to enclose and return the documents, it is crucial that the materials provide clear, simple instructions, which are easy to follow, and that the documents themselves are similarly clear and simple to use. Postal voting is often used by people who would experience particular barriers to voting, and feel it is easier to vote at home. Postal voting should not be more difficult than voting in a polling station and the process itself should not act as a barrier to the voter.

Style

- Print the declaration of identity in A4 size.

> ### ⓘ Explanation
>
> - A4 size allows for text to be in a large enough font size to be easily read, with enough space to lay out the information clearly, and enough room for the sections that have to be filled in.

🔍 Example declaration of identity (Appendix 2)

- Give each separate section of the declaration of identity a heading.

- Keep the voter and witness sections clearly separate and label each so it is clear which section is for the voter to complete, and which is for the witness.

- Make it clear which sections of the declaration the voter needs to complete, and what with (i.e. date of birth, not the date that they signed it), and make them stand out:
  - Use bold lines to highlight boxes.
  - Use arrows to signpost to the boxes that need to be filled in.
  - Put a label next to the box to say what should go in it.
  - Avoid using 'DD/MM/YYYY' labels. Use the full words: 'day, 'month', 'year'.
- Ensure the signature box is large enough to accommodate long or large signatures.
- Put a solid border around the signature box so it is clear what space the voter has to keep inside. A pale grey or thin line is not easy to see.

Content and structure

- In the written information and instructions, include information about deadlines and timescales (e.g. when talking about getting a replacement ballot paper, or returning your vote). Include:

- when each deadline is
- what to do if you have missed the deadline,
  or think you might miss it

> ⓘ **Explanation**
>
> - Including information about deadlines makes sure people know exactly when they need to do things by, and means they do not lose out on their right to vote if they think they have missed the deadline.

- Include information about what to do if you make a mistake or need another declaration of identity or ballot paper. The information should:
  - be prominent, and included early on in the declaration of identity
  - be repeated or referred to at other key points where the voter may need help or assistance
  - include information about call costs if help is available by telephone

> ⓘ **Explanation**
>
> - It should be clear to the voter from the outset that they can get help if they need it, and how to do so, so that they are not put off completing and returning their vote if they get stuck.
> - Many people will be on their own without access to someone to help them. Making it clear that help is available reassures the voter and encourages them to seek assistance if they need it, and avoids them having to struggle unnecessarily.
> - People want to know how much a telephone number costs before they ring it – they may be put off if it is not a free phone or local rate number.

- Put the signature box as the last task the voter has to complete.

> ⓘ **Explanation**
>
> - Having the signature last fits with the usual way of completing a form. People think when they have signed, they have finished, and will stop. Anything they need to complete on the declaration should come before this.

5

Bilingual materials (English and Welsh)

5A

Style

- Text written in both languages should be equal in terms of format, size, print quality, legibility and prominence. Both languages should be equally easy to read.

> ℹ **Explanation**
>
> - Equality in terms of presentation complies with the requirements of the Welsh Language Act 1993 to treat English and Welsh on an equal basis.
>
> - It also ensures equal access for the voter whether they are reading English or Welsh.

- If there is a greater amount of text in one language than the other, try, where possible, to present them in a way that means each language takes up a similar amount of space (but without contradicting the general principles of spacing – see Section 3A).

🔍 General design considerations (Section 3)

> ℹ **Explanation**
>
> - Giving each language the same amount of space on the page maintains equality in terms of presentation.
>
> - If there is more text in one language than another, they look like they do not match, or one has information missing.

- Keep English and Welsh text separate on the page (although they should not be on separate documents). Do not mix languages in the same sentence or block of text.

- Where possible, place the two languages side-by-side, separated by a blank margin.

For more detailed guidance, see the Welsh Language Board's publication, *A guide to bilingual design* (2001), available online at:

www.byig-wlb.org.uk/english/publications/publications/32.pdf

> ⓘ **Explanation**
>
> - Text is very hard to read when two languages are mixed.
>
> - Keeping the languages separate makes it easier for the reader to find the information they need in their preferred language.
>
> - People assume that the language stays the same in a sentence or block of text. Sentences or blocks of text that start in one language are likely to be overlooked by readers of the other language, which means they miss out on important information.

5B

Content and structure

- Make sure that any Welsh translation of English (or vice versa) is accurate.

> ⓘ **Explanation**
>
> - All voters should be given the same information or instructions, whether in English or in Welsh.
>
> - Inaccurate translations may confuse voters and undermine their confidence in the information and instructions.

- Use plain language in both English and Welsh. (This might mean that translations are not always literal).

> ⓘ **Explanation**
>
> - People find plain language easier to read and understand. They recognise key words and are less intimidated by familiar language.

🔎 Example bilingual materials:
- polling station notice
- polling booth notice
- postal voting 'quick-start' guide
- postal voting statement (Appendix 2)

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6

Detailed guidance

6A

Adding emphasis

You can use different styles of text or presentation to add emphasis, and make parts of a document stand out. These include bold text, colour, and differing font sizes.

Adding emphasis selectively to key information means you will catch the voter's attention as they read, as they are more likely to see and absorb the most important pieces of information.

How to add emphasis

Use bold text

Do	Avoid
• use bold to make individual words or phrases stand out • be selective and make sure that the text that is not in bold is still clear and large enough to be easily legible	• using bold for everything, or for whole blocks of text. Bold text only works when it stands out from the text around it, which will not happen if everything is in bold • using bold for lots of words, which means that none of them stand out • emphasising too much text, as this can make the rest of the information look unimportant, so people will not read it

Use colour

More detailed guidance on how to use colour, and issues of contrast, is available in Section 6D.

Do	Avoid
• use colour to highlight or mark out blocks of text, either by using a coloured background, or coloured text	• using too many different colours

Use different font sizes

You can use different font sizes to help add structure to a document, or create a 'hierarchy' of information, e.g. by having headings in a larger size than the body text. This helps the reader navigate through the document as they can easily find the information they are looking for. Using different font sizes also helps to make the document more visually appealing to the reader – a body of text all in a single font size can look like a dense 'block' of information and can be off-putting.

Do	Avoid
• use a larger font size than the main body of text for headings, and a larger size again for titles • title (largest) • heading (smaller) • main body (smallest) • use the same font size consistently for the same type of text, i.e. one size for titles, one size for headings, and one size for the body text • keep the font sizes relative to one other so the text looks like it belongs together	• using too many different font sizes – three or four should be adequate • using different font sizes within the same sentence or paragraph • making information look unimportant by putting it in a font size that is much smaller than the rest of the text

What not to do

Traditional ways of creating emphasis in text can make text more difficult to read and should be avoided. These include:

- Writing whole sentences or blocks of text in CAPITAL LETTERS. Do not use capitals for continuous text
- Underlining text
- *Writing in italics*

6B

Choosing a font

Background

The purpose of writing is to communicate. For communication to be successful, it should be written in way that means the reader can easily read and understand what you have written. You are much more likely to get your message across if your writing looks clear and is accessible, both in terms of presentation and language.

A font is a specific size and style of type (printed characters). Each font has its own characteristics in terms of the size, shape and style of characters it produces and it is important to choose a font that displays characters which are clear and easy to read. This section covers how to choose an appropriate font style.

Criteria to consider

You should aim for maximum clarity and legibility, both for documents that are read close-up, and for notices that need to attract attention and be readable at a distance.

Ideally you should use one font throughout all materials for consistency, so you need to choose one that works well in both smaller and larger sizes.

When you are choosing a font, you should consider the following:

- Choose a font that is clear and distinct when printed in a smaller size for close-up reading or in a larger size for reading at a distance, and in both 'normal' style and bold. Get advice from your organisation's communication team, or your printer or designer, on which fonts are suitable for reproducing in a large size.

- Sans-serif fonts generally work better than serif fonts when enlarged. Sans-serif fonts, such as the one used within this guidance, do not have 'serifs', the small features at the end of strokes. Serif fonts do have these features, e.g. Times New Roman. You should also avoid ornate or decorative fonts.

- Fonts vary in size, even in the same point size. Font point sizes used in this guidance refer to the size of Arial in that point size. If you are using a different font, you may need to use a larger font size to make it equivalent to the specified size in Arial. For example:

  This is Arial 12 point.

  This is Candara 12 point.

  Get professional advice from your printer or your organisation's communication team on the right point size for your font.

- Large documents (e.g. posters and notices) need larger fonts, but just enlarging the point size of a font you would normally use for word-processing does not necessarily work. This is because as the point size increases, the space between the characters (known as 'kerning') increases, and so may not be in proportion, making it less easy to read.

  - Get professional advice from your printer or your communication team on which fonts are suitable for printing in a large size, e.g. for a notice.

  - If you are using Microsoft Word, you can set automatic kerning for your font (go to 'Format', then 'Font', and select the 'Character spacing' tab). This adjusts the spacing automatically to keep it consistent at larger sizes (you can select which sizes it applies to).

  - There is more guidance below on character spacing.

Bilingual materials

The Welsh Language Board has produced a guide to bilingual design, including choosing a suitable font for writing in Welsh, which is available online:

www.byig-wlb.org.uk/english/publications/publications/32.pdf

Distinct characters

For a font to be accessible, it needs to have good character spacing, so that it is easy for the reader to distinguish between similar characters. Test your font spacing by keying the following characters to see if they can be read and distinguished easily from one another:

- Z and 2

- S and 5

- I, l, 1, and ! (I, L, the number one and exclamation mark)

- m and rn

- oa and oo

- cl and d

Also check that numbers are distinct:

- 3, 5 and 8

- 0 and 6

In Wales, ensure the font is suitable for reproducing Welsh text, particularly considering the use of:

- double consonants, e.g. dd

- circumflex accents on consonants

Advice and resources

Ask your printer or designer for advice on text layout and alignment. Other reference materials and advice from professional organisations are available online:

- RNIB's accessible and clear print guidelines:

  RNIB (2006) *See it right – Making information accessible for people with sight problems.*

  Clear print guidelines:

  www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/ publicwebsite/public_printdesign.hcsp

- General advice on print accessibility and legibility:

  www.lighthouse.org/print_leg.htm

- The Plain English Campaign's guidance on document design and layout, and form design (includes guidance on fonts and typefaces):

  www.plainenglish.co.uk/files/designguide.pdf

  www.plainenglish.co.uk/formsguide.pdf

6C

Text layout and alignment

Basic rules for layout and alignment of text are covered in Section 3B.

More detailed guidance from professional organisations on text alignment, including explanations of what to do and why, is available online:

- RNIB's accessible print guidelines:

  RNIB (2006) *See it right – Making information accessible for people with sight problems.*

  An overview of this guidance, including a checklist to download, is available on the RNIB website:

  www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/publicWebsite/public_seeitright.hcsp

- The Plain English campaign's guidance on text layout and document design:

  www.plainenglish.co.uk/files/howto.pdf

  www.plainenglish.co.uk/files/designguide.pdf

- The Welsh Language Board's guide to designing bilingual documents:

  www.byig-wlb.org.uk/english/publications/publications/32.pdf

6D

Colour and contrast

Background

When you are thinking about the colour of documents, you need to consider:

- background colour
- text colour
- picture colour (if used)
- the colours of all the documents used together

You should choose your colours carefully, and aim for maximum legibility.

Choosing colours

Colour can be useful, when used well, to differentiate between different types of information, to create emphasis, or to make documents visually appealing.

Do	Avoid
• keep your colour scheme simple • use colours consistently across the set of materials • choose colours that can be easily distinguished and have recognisable names (e.g. 'pink' not 'peach', 'yellow' not 'lemon') so that when you are referring to them, people know what you mean	• using too many different colours • garish colours (e.g. very bright orange) • colours that do not stand out well (see Contrast, below) • using red and green together (as these can look like the same colour for people with colour blindness) • using pale colours on a white background

Generally, dark coloured text on a pale background works best like this example.

Be careful about using 'reverse text', where light coloured text is put on a dark background as shown in this example.

Reverse text can be useful for giving emphasis to a title at the very top of a document, but avoid using it in the body of a document where the rest of the text is dark on a light background. People will often not notice or read the reverse text, as their eye will see a black line, which they will skip over.

More detail on creating emphasis is available in Section 6A.

? Detailed guidance: Adding emphasis (Section 6A)

Contrast

Whether your documents are colour or monochrome, you also need to consider contrast. Contrast is both about colour (how colours look next to each other) and brightness (how light or dark a colour looks against its background).

Checking

A good test of colour and contrast is to print your coloured document in black and white (greyscale on your printer) to see how clear it is.

Advice and resources

Ask your organisation's communication team for advice on choosing colours, or your printer or designer.

Check whether your own organisation has guidance or policies for communication or writing style, which may also cover issues of accessibility and equal opportunity.

There are some tools on the internet that you might find useful when considering what colours to use (note these are guides, and are not definitive):

- Background information on colour and contrast:

  www.lighthouse.org/accessibility/effective-color-contrast/

- Colour contrast 'suitability' tool (designed for web pages, but also useful for printed materials):

  www.snook.ca/technical/colour_contrast/colour.html

- General guidance on accessible print, including colour and contrast:

  www.informationalternatives.co.uk/clearprint.htm

6E

Writing in plain language

Background

To communicate effectively, you need to write in a way that is easily understood by the reader. People are more likely to read and understand text when it is written clearly and simply.

Voting is universal – the electorate spans a wide range, for example age, nationality, voting experience and language. You should aim for maximum readability, so that your message is understood by the widest possible audience. Writing in plain language will help you do this.

Writing in plain language does not mean 'dumbing down' or being vague or inaccurate – it requires care and skill to get it right. It means using language that people can recognise and understand, and writing in a way that is clear, helpful and engaging.

This section covers how to write in terms of style and language. It is also important to consider how your documents look.

More guidance on font and layout is available in Sections 6B and 6C.

Style

Voters can be easily intimidated or put off by writing that is very formal or sounds officious.

These are some general guidelines you should follow. See the links at the end of this section to detailed guidance from organisations specialising in plain language. In general:

- Use a polite and friendly tone. Do not be overly officious or formal, or use threatening language. If you need to warn people, do so by being factual rather than referring to 'fraud' and 'crime'.

- Be concise. Keep sentences short (an average of 15–20 words). It is fine to vary sentence length as some will need to be longer than others. But try and keep to one main point per sentence, and break up any very long sentences into smaller points, or by using bullets.

> **For example**, in this phrase:
>
> '…if you do not, your vote will be considered invalid'
>
> the word 'considered' could be left out without altering the meaning.

- Cut out repetition and extra words that do not add to the meaning. Try to edit out what you do not need.

- Be direct. Say 'do this', 'write this', 'tell us…' Use 'please' in front of the instruction to avoid sounding rude.

- Be approachable: use words like 'you', 'we', 'us', even if they are not technically accurate (for example, if you could be addressing more than one person). This helps the reader to feel like the information is relevant to them, and that there is a person behind the message.

- Say what to do, not what not to do, to avoid confusing the reader.

- Put the option before the action: 'if you want x, do y'. For example: 'If you need help, please speak to a member of staff'.

- Use active verbs where possible, rather than passive verbs. Active verbs are clearer and more direct, and often mean you can write more concisely.

  To write active verbs, put the doer before the verb. Think about who or what is performing the action.

  Note: some of the words used here are technical terms, and have a different meaning to their everyday use e.g. 'active' and 'passive', 'subject' and 'object'. For a more detailed explanation of their meaning, please see the links at the end of this section.

  > **For example** in these sentences, the subject is the Returning Officer, the verb is 'to receive' and the object is the 'ballot paper':
  >
  > **Passive:** '…the ballot paper must be received by the Returning Officer…' (10 words)
  >
  > **Active:** '…the Returning Officer must receive your ballot paper…' (8 words)

Language and vocabulary

- Use familiar, straightforward, everyday language.

- Use the same way of writing about something every time. For example, if you are giving instructions, write them in the same way on every document. This avoids confusing the voter about whether the information is the same or different.

- Avoid technical and legal terms, and jargon, which would not be understood by someone unfamiliar with elections. Keep terminology consistent throughout all election materials.

- Avoid unfamiliar abbreviations, such as 'PVS' for postal voting statement. Spell out the words in full.

- Think about whether any of the words or phrases used could be ambiguous (e.g. 'Directions for voters' could be guidance, or physical directions). If so, use more specific language instead.

- Use gender-neutral language, avoiding references to 'him' or 'her', 'he' or 'she', which can confuse the voter about who is being referred to. It is fine to use 'they' or 'them' instead, even if you are only referring to one person.

Advice and resources

More detailed advice and guidance from professional organisations on how to write in plain language is available online:

- The Plain English Campaign's guides:

  How to write in plain English:

  www.plainenglish.co.uk/files/howto.pdf

  The A to Z of alternative words:

  www.plainenglish.co.uk/files/alternative.pdf

- The Oxford University Press' overview of plain English:

  www.askoxford.com/betterwriting/plainenglish/?view=uk

- The Plain Language Commission's guide to plain English words:

  www.clearest.co.uk/?id=46

- National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) – information and guidance on how write readable text and measure readability:

  www.niace.org.uk/development-research/readability

- IDeA guidance and advice on using plain English in local government (you need to register with the site to be able to view this, but registration is open to everyone):

  www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=8021380

- Mencap guidance on accessible communication:

  www.mencap.org.uk/displaypagedoc.asp?id=1579

Specifically for lawyers and legal professionals:

- The Plain Language Commission's guide to writing legal language more plainly:

  www.clearest.co.uk/files/HowToMakeLawsEasier.pdf

- Clarity, an organisation promoting the use of clear language by the legal profession:

  www.clarity-international.net/

Appendix
1

Design checklist

Use the checklist on the next page to check the design of your document. If you can, get someone to check your document who has not been involved in designing or producing it, as they will act as a fresh pair of eyes. They might want to try using the document you want them to check before they fill in the checklist.

Design checklist	Yes	No
Is the layout clear and uncluttered?		
Is there a title/header?		
Is the font and font size clear and legible?		
Is the document visually appealing?		
Is space and colour used to distinguish different sections/information?		
Where colour is used, is it clear what the colour-coding is and why it is being used? Is the colour-coding consistent across all materials?		
Is there a good contrast between the text/pictures and the background?		
Does the positioning of information and use of white space make instructions and key information stand out/clear?		
Does the document avoid any significant areas of blank space that could mislead the voter into filling them in?		
Is there logical order with a natural sequence?		
Is the information relevant – describing what the document is for, how to carry out the task?		
Are actions named consistently across the guidance and instructions?		
Is information easy to find?		
Is bold used to highlight key information?		
Is it clear which parts the user has to complete?		
For the parts the voter has to complete, is there information to tell them exactly what they need to put in the sections they are completing, and what the possible answers (or types of answers) are?		
Are spaces for the user to fill in of sufficient size?		
Are there instructions/prompts in the right place for the task?		
Do the words used in the instructions correspond to the required action?		
Are instructions and information written in clear, simple language without jargon?		
Is the terminology familiar to voters?		
Are instructions direct and written in an affirmative voice?		
Does the most important information come at the beginning of the instruction?		
Are information and instructions written in a way that does not rely on previous experience of voting for them to be understood?		

Appendix 2

Example materials

This appendix contains examples of voting materials, to show how the guidance could be applied to prescribed forms in practice. The example materials are based on existing prescribed forms that would be used at a UK Parliamentary general election.

The appendix also contains some example 'quick-start' postal voting guides for both first-past-the-post and single transferable vote elections.

You can use these examples as a guide when designing and producing your own materials for use at elections, or to help you when commissioning materials from an external supplier. The example materials can also be downloaded from the Do Politics Centre on our website at www.dopolitics.org.uk

Contents

- Polling station notice (English)
- Polling station notice (bilingual)[10]
- Polling booth notice (English)
- Polling booth notice (bilingual)
- Postal voting 'quick-start' guides:
  - First-past-the-post election, Great Britain (English)
  - First-past-the-post election, Great Britain (bilingual)
  - Single transferable vote election, Scotland (English)
  - First-past-the-post election, Northern Ireland (English)
  - Single transferable vote election, Northern Ireland (English)
- Postal voting statement, Great Britain (English)
- Postal voting statement, Great Britain (bilingual)
- Declaration of identity, Northern Ireland (English)

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[10] Bilingual refers to documents in English and Welsh.

Colour palette

Following the example materials, there is a colour palette showing the colours which have been used throughout the example designs. If you wish to design materials using this colour palette, there is an explanation of how the colours should be used.

ⓘ Guidance for voters

1 When you are given a ballot paper go to one of the compartments.

Mark a cross (X) in the box on the right hand side of the ballot paper opposite the name of the candidate you are voting for.

2 Vote for ONE candidate only.

Put no other mark on the ballot paper, or your vote may not be counted.

⚠ **Do not let anyone see your vote.**

3 Fold the ballot paper in two.

Show the back of the ballot paper to the Presiding Officer so as to disclose the number and other unique identifying mark.

Put the ballot paper in the ballot box and leave the polling station.

4 If by mistake you spoil a ballot paper, show it to the Presiding Officer and ask for another one.

ⓘ Add local authority branding/text here.

Guidance for voters
Arweiniad i bleidleiswyr

1 When you are given a ballot paper go to one of the compartments.

Mark a cross (X) in the box on the right hand side of the ballot paper opposite the name of the candidate you are voting for.

1 Pan gewch chi bapur pleidleisio, ewch i un o'r bythau.

Rhowch groes (X) yn y blwch ar ochr dde'r papur pleidleisio gyferbyn ag enw'r ymgeisydd yr ydych chi'n pleidleisio drosto/drosti.

2 Vote for ONE candidate only.

Put no other mark on the ballot paper, or your vote may not be counted.

! Do not let anyone see your vote.

2 Pleidleisiwch dros UN ymgeisydd yn unig.

Peidiwch â rhoi unrhyw farc arall ar y papur pleidleisio, neu mae'n bosibl na chaiff eich pleidlais ei chyfrif.

! Peidiwch â gadael i neb weld eich pleidlais.

3 Fold the ballot paper in two.

Show the back of the ballot paper to the Presiding Officer so as to disclose the number and other unique identifying mark.

Put the ballot paper in the ballot box and leave the polling station.

3 Plygwch y papur pleidleisio yn ei hanner.

Dangoswch gefn y papur pleidleisio i'r Swyddog Llywyddu er mwyn dangos y rhif a'r marc unigryw arall.

Rhowch y papur pleidleisio yn y blwch pleidleisio a gadael yr orsaf bleidleisio.

4 If by mistake you spoil a ballot paper, show it to the Presiding Officer and ask for another one.

4 Os byddwch chi'n difetha papur pleidleisio trwy gamgymeriad, dangoswch ef i'r Swyddog Llywyddu a gofyn am un arall.

Add local authority branding/text here.
Ychwanegwch frand/testun yr awdurdod lleol yma.

Vote for ONE candidate only.

Put no other mark on the ballot paper, or your vote may not be counted.

Pleidleisiwch dros UN ymgeisydd yn unig.

Peidiwch â rhoi unrhyw farc arall ar y papur pleidleisio, neu mae'n bosibl na chaiff eich pleidlais ei chyfrif.

Vote for ONE candidate only.

Put no other mark on the ballot paper, or your vote may not be counted

Postal voting quick start guide

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We have sent you this postal voting pack because you asked to vote by post at this election. This means that you cannot vote in a polling station at this election.

⟨?⟩ If at any time you are not sure what to do, make a mistake, or need help, contact us. Our contact details are:

Phone/email contact info
opening times

ⓘ In your pack is:

- Your ballot paper
- Your postal voting statement
- Envelope **A**
- Envelope **B**

ⓘ What you need to do

1 Mark your vote on the ballot paper.

Ballot Paper

2 Put your ballot paper into envelope **A** and seal it.
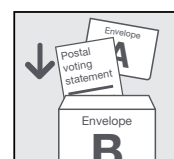
Ballot Paper
Envelope **A**

3 Complete your postal voting statement with your date of birth and your signature.

⟨!⟩ Make sure you fill in your **date of birth** not today's date.

Postal voting state
Date of birth → [DD] [MM]
Signature →

4 Put your completed postal voting statement **and** envelope **A**, with your ballot paper inside, into envelope **B** and seal it.

Post envelope **B**. It is **free** to return your vote by post so you don't need a stamp if you are posting it in the UK.

Envelope **A**
Postal voting statement
Envelope **B**

⟨!⟩ **Make sure you send back your postal voting statement and your ballot paper, or your vote might not be counted.**

⟨!⟩ **Send your vote back to us straight away.** We need to get it by **10 pm on** [day/date of poll] so make sure you leave enough time for it to arrive in the post.

If you miss the post, you can drop off your vote at our office, at the address on envelope **B**. Or you can take it into any polling station in [the [   ] constituency/ward]/ [your constituency/ward] between 7am and 10pm on polling day, [day/date of poll].

To find out which polling stations are in your [constituency/ward], please see our website, [www.website.gov.uk] or contact us. Our contact details are at the top of the page.

Please turn over

ⓘ Voting at this election

- At this election, there are ⬚ candidates

- You can vote for 1 candidate

- You vote using an **X**

ⓘ How to mark your ballot paper

- Put an **X** in the empty box to the right of the name of the person you want to vote for.

  ⚠ **Remember:** You can only vote for 1 candidate

  When you have finished marking your ballot paper, fold it and put it inside envelope **A**.

? Getting help

You can ask someone you know for help, but they cannot fill in your ballot paper for you. They can help you fill in your postal voting statement but you must sign it yourself.

⚠ Your vote is secret. Do not let anyone else see how you have voted.

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⚠ Checklist

Stop! Before you post your vote, make sure you have: ☑

1 Put your marked ballot paper into envelope **A** ☐

2 Filled in your postal voting statement ☐

3 Put envelope **A and** your postal voting statement into envelope **B** ☐

Make sure your vote gets to us by 10pm on day/date of poll **.**

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i In your pack is:

- Your ballot paper
- Envelope **A**
- Your postal voting statement
- Envelope **B**

Dyma eich pecyn pleidleisio drwy'r post ar gyfer etholiad [   ] **ar** [diwrnod/dyddiad y bleidlais].

Rydym wedi anfon y pecyn pleidleisio drwy'r post hwn atoch oherwydd ichi ofyn am gael pleidleisio drwy'r post yn yr etholiad hwn. Mae hyn yn golygu na fyddwch chi'n gallu pleidleisio mewn gorsaf bleidleisio yn yr etholiad hwn.

[?] Os ydych yn ansicr beth i'w wneud, yn gwneud camgymeriad, neu fod angen cymorth arnoch unrhyw bryd, cysylltwch â ni. Dyma ein manylion cyswllt:

Gwybodaeth gyswllt ffôn/e-bost
Amseroedd agor

i Yn eich pecyn mae:

- Eich papur pleidleisio
- Amlen **A**
- Eich datganiad pleidleisio drwy'r post
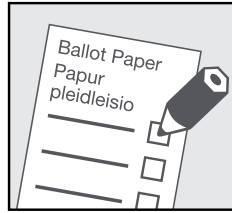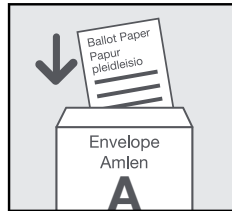- Amlen **B**

Please turn over

Trosodd

ⓘ What you need to do	**ⓘ Yr hyn y mae arnoch angen ei wneud**

1 Mark your vote on the ballot paper.
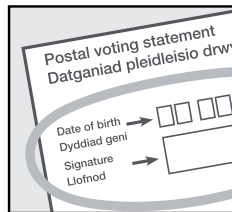
Ballot Paper
Papur pleidleisio

1 Marciwch eich pleidlais ar y papur pleidleisio.

2 Put your ballot paper into envelope **A** and seal it.

Ballot Paper
Papur pleidleisio

Envelope
Amlen
A

2 Rhowch eich papur pleidleisio i mewn yn amlen **A** a'i selio.

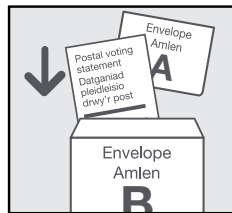**3** Complete your postal voting statement with your date of birth and your signature.

⚠ Make sure you fill in your **date of birth** not today's date.

Postal voting statement
Datganiad pleidleisio drwy

Date of birth
Dyddiad geni →
Signature
Llofnod →

3 Llenwch eich datganiad pleidleisio drwy'r post â'ch dyddiad geni a'ch llofnod.

⚠ Sicrhewch eich bod yn nodi eich **dyddiad geni** nid dyddiad heddiw.

4 Put your completed postal voting statement **and** envelope **A**, with your ballot paper inside, into envelope **B** and seal it.

Post envelope **B**. It is **free** to return your vote by post so you don't need a stamp if you are posting it in the UK.

Envelope
Amlen
A

Postal voting statement
Datganiad pleidleisio drwy'r post

Envelope
Amlen
B

4 Rhowch eich datganiad pleidleisio drwy'r post wedi'i gwblhau **ac** amlen **A**, gyda'ch papur pleidleisio y tu mewn iddi, i mewn yn amlen **B** a'i selio.

Postiwch amlen **B**. Mae'n **rhad ac am ddim** dychwelyd eich pleidlais drwy'r post felly nid oes angen stamp arnoch os ydych yn ei phostio yn y DU.

⚠ **Make sure you send back your postal voting statement and your ballot paper, or your vote might not be counted.**

⚠ **Sicrhewch eich bod yn dychwelyd eich datganiad pleidleisio drwy'r post a'ch papur pleidleisio, neu efallai na fydd eich pleidlais yn cael ei chyfrif.**

⚠ **Send your vote back to us straight away.** We need to get it by **10 pm on** day/date of poll so make sure you leave enough time for it to arrive in the post.

If you miss the post, you can drop off your vote at our office, at the address on envelope **B**. Or you can take it into any polling station in [the ⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚ constituency/ ward]/ [your constituency/ward] between 7am and 10pm on polling day, day/date of poll .

⚠ **Anfonwch eich pleidlais yn ôl atom yn syth.** Mae angen inni ei chael erbyn 10 pm ar diwrnod/dyddiad y bleidlais felly sicrhewch eich bod yn caniatáu digon o amser iddi gyrraedd yn y post.

Os byddwch yn methu'r post, gallwch adael eich pleidlais yn ein swyddfa, yn y cyfeiriad ar amlen **B**. Neu gallwch fynd â hi i mewn i unrhyw orsaf bleidleisio yn [etholaeth/ward ⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚]/ [eich etholaeth/ ward] rhwng 7am a 10pm ar y diwrnod pleidleisio, diwrnod/dyddiad y bleidlais .

To find out which polling stations are in your [constituency/ward], please see our website, www.website.gov.uk or contact us. Our contact details are on the first page.

ⓘ Voting at this election

- At this election, there are [　　　] candidates

- You can vote for 1 candidate

- You vote using an **X**

ⓘ How to mark your ballot paper

- Put an **X** in the empty box to the right of the name of the person you want to vote for.

  ⚠ **Remember:** You can only vote for 1 candidate

  When you have finished marking your ballot paper, fold it and put it inside envelope **A**.

⍰ Getting help

You can ask someone you know for help, but they cannot fill in your ballot paper for you. They can help you fill in your postal voting statement but you must sign it yourself.

⚠ Your vote is secret. Do not let anyone else see how you have voted.

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Please turn over ▶

I gael gwybod pa orsafoedd pleidleisio sydd yn eich [etholaeth/ward], gweler ein gwefan, www.website.gov.uk neu cysylltwch â ni. Mae ein manylion cyswllt ar y dudalen gyntaf.

ⓘ Pleidleisio yn yr etholiad hwn

- Yn yr etholiad hwn, mae [　　　] o ymgeiswyr

- Gallwch bleidleisio dros 1 ymgeisydd

- Rydych chi'n pleidleisio gan ddefnyddio **X**

ⓘ Sut i farcio eich papur pleidleisio

- Rhowch **X** yn y blwch gwag i'r dde o enw'r sawl mae arnoch eisiau pleidleisio drosto.

  ⚠ **Cofiwch:** Dim ond dros 1 ymgeisydd y gallwch bleidleisio

  Pan fyddwch wedi gorffen marcio eich papur pleidleisio, plygwch ef a'i roi y tu mewn i amlen **A**.

⍰ Cael cymorth

Gallwch ofyn i rywun rydych chi'n ei adnabod am gymorth, ond ni all lenwi eich papur pleidleisio drosoch chi. Gall eich helpu i lenwi eich datganiad pleidleisio drwy'r post ond mae'n rhaid ichi ei lofnodi eich hun.

⚠ Mae eich pleidlais yn gyfrinachol. Peidiwch â gadael i unrhyw un arall weld sut ydych wedi pleidleisio.

Os nad ydych yn siŵr beth i'w wneud, yn gwneud camgymeriad, neu fod angen cymorth arnoch, cysylltwch â ni. Mae ein manylion cyswllt ar y dudalen gyntaf.

Trosodd ▶

ⓘ Checklist

Stop! Before you post your vote, make sure you have: ☑

1. Put your marked ballot paper into envelope **A** ☐

2. Filled in your postal voting statement ☐

3. Put envelope **A and** your postal voting statement into envelope **B** ☐

Make sure your vote gets to us by 10pm on day/date of poll .

ⓘ Rhestr wirio

Arhoswch! Cyn ichi bostio eich pleidlais, sicrhewch eich bod wedi: ☑

1. Rhoi eich papur pleidleisio wedi'i farcio yn amlen **A** ☐

2. Llenwi eich datganiad pleidleisio drwy'r post ☐

3. Rhoi amlen **A a'ch** datganiad pleidleisio drwy'r post i mewn yn amlen **B** ☐

Sicrhewch fod eich pleidlais yn ein cyrraedd erbyn 10pm ar diwrnod/dyddiad y bleidlais .

Postal voting quick start guide

This is your postal voting pack for the ☐ **election on** ⃞ day/date of poll ⃞ **.**

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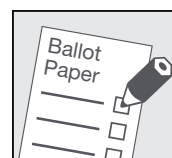
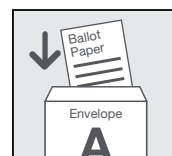> Phone/email contact info
> opening times

ⓘ In your pack is:

- Your ballot paper
- Your postal voting statement
- Envelope **A**
- Envelope **B**

ⓘ What you need to do

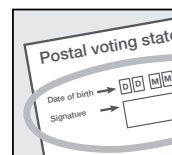**1** Mark your vote on the ballot paper.

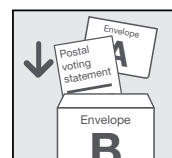**2** Put your ballot paper into envelope **A** and seal it.

3 Complete your postal voting statement with your date of birth and your signature.

⚠ Make sure you fill in your **date of birth** not today's date.

4 Put your completed postal voting statement **and** envelope **A**, with your ballot paper inside, into envelope **B** and seal it.

Post envelope **B**. It is **free** to return your vote by post so you don't need a stamp if you are posting it in the UK.

⚠ **Make sure you send back your postal voting statement and your ballot paper, or your vote might not be counted.**

⚠ **Send your vote back to us straight away.** We need to get it by **10 pm on** ⃞ day/date of poll ⃞ so make sure you leave enough time for it to arrive in the post.

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To find out which polling stations are in your ward, please see our website, www.website.gov.uk or contact us. Our contact details are at the top of the page.

Please turn over

ⓘ Voting at this election

- At this election, there are [   ] candidates

- You can vote for as many or as few of the candidates as you like

- You vote by using numbers to rank the candidates in the order you would like them to be elected

- You don't have to number all the candidates

- Follow the instructions below on how to mark your ballot paper

ⓘ How to mark your ballot paper

- Decide which candidate is your first choice to be elected
- Mark a number 1 in the empty box to the right of their name
- If you want to, decide which candidate is your next choice to be elected
- Mark a number 2 in the empty box to the right of their name
- You can keep voting for the other candidates by using the next number to mark your vote each time
- Do not use the same number twice
- Use your numbers in order and don't miss out any numbers in the middle

  ⚠ **Remember:** You can vote for as many or as few of the candidates as you like

  When you have finished marking your ballot paper, fold it and put it inside envelope **A**

ⓘ Getting help

You can ask someone you know for help, but they cannot fill in your ballot paper for you. They can help you fill in your postal voting statement but you must sign it yourself.

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⚠ Checklist

Stop! Before you post your vote, make sure you have: ☑

1 Put your marked ballot paper into envelope **A**   ☐

2 Filled in your postal voting statement   ☐

3 Put envelope **A and** your postal voting statement into envelope **B**   ☐

Make sure your vote gets to us by 10pm on [day/date of poll] **.**

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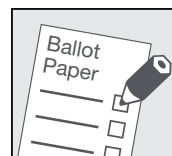[?] If at any time you are not sure what to do, make a mistake, or need help, contact us. Our contact details are:

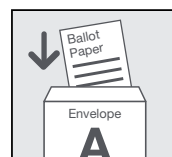Phone/email contact info
opening times

[i] In your pack is:

- Your ballot paper
- Your declaration of identity
- Envelope **A**
- Envelope **B**

[i] What you need to do

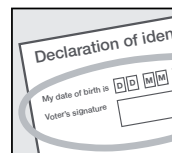**1** Mark your vote on the ballot paper.

2 Put your ballot paper into envelope **A** and seal it.

3 Complete your declaration of identity with your date of birth and your signature, in front of a witness.
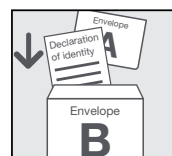
[!] Make sure you fill in your **date of birth** not today's date.

4 The witness must then sign and date the declaration and fill in their name and address.

5 Put your completed declaration of identity **and** envelope **A**, with your ballot paper inside, into envelope **B** and seal it.

Post envelope **B**. It is **free** to return your vote by post so you don't need a stamp if you are posting it in the UK.

[!] **Make sure you send back your declaration of identity and your ballot paper, or your vote might not be counted.**

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If you miss the post, you can drop off your vote at our office, at the address on envelope **B**.

Please turn over

ⓘ Voting at this election

- At this election, there are [   ] candidates

- You can vote for 1 candidate

- You vote using an **X**

ⓘ How to mark your ballot paper

- Put an **X** in the empty box to the right of the name of the person you want to vote for.

  ⚠ **Remember:** You can only vote for 1 candidate

  When you have finished marking your ballot paper, fold it and put it inside envelope **A**.

⍰ Getting help

You can ask someone you know for help, but they cannot fill in your ballot paper for you. They can help you fill in your declaration of identity but you must sign it yourself.

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⚠ Checklist

Stop! Before you post your vote, make sure you have: ☑

1	Put your marked ballot paper into envelope **A**	☐
2	Filled in your declaration of identity	☐
3	Got your witness to fill in their part of the declaration of identity	☐
4	Put envelope **A and** your declaration of identity into envelope **B**	☐

Make sure your vote gets to us by 10pm on [day/date of poll] .

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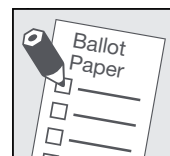
Phone/email contact info
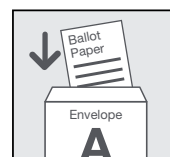opening times

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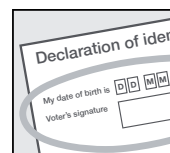
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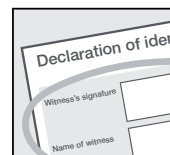
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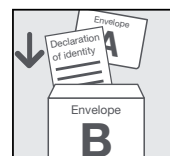[!] Make sure you fill in your **date of birth** not today's date.

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5 Put your completed declaration of identity **and** envelope **A**, with your ballot paper inside, into envelope **B** and seal it.

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- If you want to, decide which candidate is your next choice to be elected

- Mark a number 2 in the empty box to the left of their name

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- Do not use the same number twice

- Use your numbers in order and don't miss out any numbers in the middle

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You can ask someone you know for help, but they cannot fill in your ballot paper for you. They can help you fill in your declaration of identity but you must sign it yourself.

⚠ Your vote is secret. Do not let anyone else see how you have voted.

If you are not sure what to do, make a mistake, or need help, contact us. Our contact details are at the top of the previous page.

⚠ Checklist

Stop! Before you post your vote, make sure you have: ☑

1 Put your marked ballot paper into envelope **A** ☐

2 Filled in your declaration of identity ☐

3 Got your witness to fill in their part of the declaration of identity ☐

4 Put envelope **A and** your declaration of identity into envelope **B** ☐

Make sure your vote gets to us by 10pm on [day/date of poll] **.**

Postal voting statement

Voter's name [   ]

Ballot paper number: 123ABC789-X

(!) You must provide your signature and date of birth. If you do not, the postal voting statement will be invalid and your vote will not be counted. **Please use black ink**.

I am the person the ballot paper numbered above was sent to.

Date of birth
(voter's date
of birth) →

D	D	M	M	Y	Y	Y	Y

Signature
(voter's signature) →

[   ]

(!) IMPORTANT –
keep signature within border

(!) **Electoral fraud is a crime. You must not vote using a ballot paper that is not addressed to you or interfere with another voter's ballot paper.**

(!) Please read instructions to the voter **below**.

Issued by the Returning Officer.

(i) Instructions to the voter

Complete the ballot paper yourself and in private. If you need help contact the Returning Officer's staff as shown here:

Add Returning Officer's staff contact details.

1 Vote for ONE candidate only.

Do not mark the ballot paper in any other way or your vote may not be counted.

2 Mark a cross (X) in the box on the right hand side of the ballot paper opposite the name of the candidate you are voting for.

3 If you need help voting, the person helping you must not tell anyone how you voted.

4 Put the ballot paper in the small envelope marked **A** and seal it.

5 Complete the postal voting statement by signing it, and providing your date of birth.

6 You must provide your signature and date of birth.

If you do not, the postal voting statement will be invalid and your vote will not be counted.

7 Then put the envelope marked **A** together with the postal voting statement in the larger envelope marked **B**.

Return it straightaway.

8 After receiving this postal vote, you cannot vote in person at a polling station at this election.

9 If you accidentally spoil your ballot paper, you can apply to the Returning Officer for a replacement **before 5pm on** [day/date of poll]. You must return the spoilt ballot paper, the postal voting statement, and the envelopes marked **A** and **B**.

Make sure you contact the Returning Officer as soon as possible.

(!) Your ballot paper and the postal voting statement must be received by the Returning Officer **by 10pm on** [day/date of poll].

You can deliver your completed postal vote to any polling station in your constituency on polling day.

(!) Electoral fraud is a crime. You must not vote using a ballot paper that is not addressed to you or interfere with another voter's ballot paper.

(!) It is illegal to vote more than once (unless you are appointed as a proxy for another elector) at the same election.

Postal voting statement
Datganiad pleidleisio drwy'r post

Voter's name
Enw'r pleidleisiwr

Ballot paper number:
Rhif papur pleidleisio: 123ABC789-X

(!) You must provide your signature and date of birth. If you do not, the postal voting statement will be invalid and your vote will not be counted. **Please use black ink**.

(!) Mae'n rhaid ichi ddarparu eich llofnod a'ch dyddiad geni. Os na fyddwch yn gwneud hyn, ni fydd y datganiad pleidleisio drwy'r post yn ddilys ac ni fydd eich pleidlais yn cael ei chyfrif. **Defnyddiwch inc du os gwelwch yn dda.**

I am the person the ballot paper numbered above was sent to.

Fi yw'r sawl yr anfonwyd y papur pleidleisio a rifwyd uchod ato.

Date of birth
(voter's date of birth)

Dyddiad geni
(dyddiad geni'r pleidleisiwr)

Day | Month | Year
Dydd | Mis | Blwyddyn

Signature
(voter's signature)

(!) IMPORTANT – keep signature within border

Llofnod
(llofnod y pleidleisiwr)

(!) PWYSIG – cadwch y llofnod o fewn y blwch

(!) **Electoral fraud is a crime. You must not vote using a ballot paper that is not addressed to you or interfere with another voter's ballot paper.**

(!) **Mae twyll etholiadol yn drosedd. Nid ydych yn cael pleidleisio gan ddefnyddio papur pleidleisio sydd heb ei gyfeirio atoch chi nac ymyrryd â phapur pleidleisio pleidleisiwr arall.**

(!) Please read instructions to the voter **below**.

(!) Darllenwch y cyfarwyddiadau i'r pleidleisiwr **isod** os gwelwch yn dda.

Issued by the Returning Officer.

Cyhoeddwyd gan y Swyddog Canlyniadau.

(i) **Instructions to the voter**

Complete the ballot paper yourself and in private. If you need help contact the Returning Officer's staff as shown here:

Add Returning Officer's staff contact details.

(i) **Cyfarwyddiadau i'r pleidleisiwr**

Llenwch y papur pleidleisio ar eich pen eich hun ac yn breifat. Os oes angen cymorth arnoch cysylltwch â staff y Swyddog Canlyniadau fel y dangosir yma:

Ychwanegwch fanylion cyswllt staff y Swyddog Canlyniadau.

Please turn over ▶

Trosodd ▶

1 Vote for ONE candidate only.

 Do not mark the ballot paper in any other way or your vote may not be counted.

2 Mark a cross (X) in the box on the right hand side of the ballot paper opposite the name of the candidate you are voting for.

3 If you need help voting, the person helping you must not tell anyone how you voted.

4 Put the ballot paper in the small envelope marked **A** and seal it.

5 Complete the postal voting statement by signing it, and providing your date of birth.

6 You must provide your signature and date of birth.

 If you do not, the postal voting statement will be invalid and your vote will not be counted.

7 Then put the envelope marked **A** together with the postal voting statement in the larger envelope marked **B**.

 Return it straightaway.

8 After receiving this postal vote, you cannot vote in person at a polling station at this election.

9 If you accidentally spoil your ballot paper, you can apply to the Returning Officer for a replacement **before 5pm on** [day/date of poll]. You must return the spoilt ballot paper, the postal voting statement, and the envelopes marked **A** and **B**.

 Make sure you contact the Returning Officer as soon as possible.

[!] Your ballot paper and the postal voting statement must be received by the Returning Officer **by 10pm on** [day/date of poll].

[!] You can deliver your completed postal vote to any polling station in your constituency on polling day.

 Electoral fraud is a crime. You must not vote using a ballot paper that is not addressed to you or interfere with another voter's ballot paper.

[!] It is illegal to vote more than once (unless you are appointed as a proxy for another elector) at the same election.

1 Pleidleisiwch dros UN ymgeisydd yn unig.

 Peidiwch â marcio'r papur pleidleisio mewn unrhyw ffordd arall neu efallai na fydd eich pleidlais yn cael ei chyfrif.

2 Rhowch groes (X) yn y blwch ar ochr dde'r papur pleidleisio gyferbyn ag enw'r ymgeisydd rydych yn pleidleisio drosto.

3 Os oes angen cymorth arnoch wrth bleidleisio, nid yw'r sawl sy'n eich helpu'n cael dweud wrth neb sut y gwnaethoch bleidleisio.

4 Rhowch y papur pleidleisio yn yr amlen fach ag **A** arni a'i selio.

5 Llenwch y datganiad pleidleisio drwy'r post drwy ei lofnodi, a darparu eich dyddiad geni.

6 Mae'n rhaid ichi ddarparu eich llofnod a'ch dyddiad geni.

 Os na fyddwch yn gwneud hynny, ni fydd y datganiad pleidleisio drwy'r post yn ddilys ac ni fydd eich pleidlais yn cael ei chyfrif.

7 Wedyn rhowch yr amlen ag **A** arni gyda'r datganiad pleidleisio drwy'r post yn yr amlen fwy â **B** arni.

 Dychwelwch hi ar unwaith.

8 Ar ôl derbyn y bleidlais bost hon, ni allwch bleidleisio'n bersonol mewn gorsaf bleidleisio yn yr etholiad hwn.

9 Os byddwch yn difetha eich papur pleidleisio'n ddamweiniol, gallwch wneud cais i'r Swyddog Canlyniadau am un arall **cyn 5pm ar** [diwrnod/dyddiad y bleidlais]. Mae'n rhaid ichi ddychwelyd y papur pleidleisio wedi'i ddifetha, y datganiad pleidleisio drwy'r post, a'r amlenni ag **A** a **B** arnynt.

 Sicrhewch eich bod yn cysylltu â'r Swyddog Canlyniadau cyn gynted â phosibl.

[!] Mae'n rhaid i'r Swyddog Canlyniadau gael eich papur pleidleisio a'ch datganiad pleidleisio drwy'r post **erbyn 10pm ar** [diwrnod/dyddiad y bleidlais].

[!] Gallwch gyflwyno eich pleidlais bost wedi'i chwblhau i unrhyw orsaf bleidleisio yn eich etholaeth ar y diwrnod pleidleisio.

 Mae twyll etholiadol yn drosedd. Nid ydych yn cael pleidleisio gan ddefnyddio papur pleidleisio sydd heb ei gyfeirio atoch chi nac ymyrryd â phapur pleidleisio pleidleisiwr arall.

[!] Mae'n anghyfreithlon pleidleisio fwy nag unwaith (heblaw bod etholwr arall wedi'ch penodi'n ddirprwy) yn yr un etholiad.

Declaration of identity

Representation of the People Acts

Ballot paper number: 123ABC789-X

I am the person to whom the ballot paper numbered above was sent.

My date of birth is | D | D | M | M | Y | Y | Y | Y |

(you are not required to give your date of birth if you are to vote as a proxy for someone else).

Voter's signature

The voter, who is personally known to me, has signed this declaration in my presence.

Witness's signature

Date

Name of witness
⚠ Write clearly

Address of witness
⚠ Write clearly

ⓘ Instructions to the voter

1 You must sign this declaration of identity in the presence of a person known to you.

That person should then sign this declaration as a witness, adding his or her name and address. Without this the declaration will be invalid.

2 Vote for ONE candidate only.

Put no other mark on the ballot paper or your vote may not be counted.

3 Mark a cross (X) in the box on the right hand side of the ballot paper opposite the name of the candidate you are voting for.

Do this secretly. If you cannot vote without assistance, the person assisting you must not disclose how you have voted.

4 Put the ballot paper in the small envelope marked **A** and seal it.

Then put the envelope marked **A**, together with the declaration of identity, in the larger envelope marked **B**.

5 Return envelope marked **B** without delay. The ballot paper must be received by the Returning Officer not later than the close of the poll.

6 If you receive more than one ballot paper, remember that it is illegal to vote more than once (otherwise than as proxy) at the same election.

7 At this election you cannot vote in person at a polling station, even if you receive an official poll card.

8 If you inadvertently spoil your ballot paper, you can apply to the Returning Officer for another one. With your application you must return, in your own envelope, the spoilt ballot paper, the declaration of identity and the envelopes marked **A** and **B**.

Remember that there is little time available if a fresh postal ballot paper is to be issued and counted.

Example materials colour palette

General considerations

When you are using the colour palette always aim for maximum clarity. Make sure the colour combination you choose has suitable contrast. For example, Pantone 269 and Pantone 2425 may appear very similar or the same to some readers, so avoid using them directly next to each other.

Producing materials in colour

The primary palette contains the colours used for the example voter materials in this guidance. You can use any suitable combination of colours, except for **Pantone 711**, which should only be used for information that needs to warn the reader.

⚠️ Always use this colour (Pantone 711) text with the 'warning' icon.

The secondary palette should be used sparingly, for example when a greater variety of colours is required to bring clarity to the information, or as colour-coding between documents.

Use the CMYK breakdowns for lithographic print production.[11]

## Black and white example materials

Pantones 422 and 424 can be achieved in black and white printing by specifying 33% black (Pantone 422) and 61% black (Pantone 424). Always consider visual accessibility issues when combining tints.

Foreground and background colours

Always aim for maximum clarity with your foreground and background colour combination. The colours Pantone 285, 424, 269, 2425 (456 in the secondary palette) are recommended as foreground colours. When choosing an appropriate background colour choose a suitable tint from any colour in the palette (Pantone 422 is the only colour that can be used at 100% as a background colour).

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[11] CMYK is short for Cyan-Magenta-Yellow-Key (black). CMYK is a colour model in which all colours are described as a mixture of these four colours, and is used in lithographic and digital printing. Pantone colour references are used when printing out of one or two colours only, usually black and one specific colour, or for adding a specific colour to CMYK printing.

Primary palette
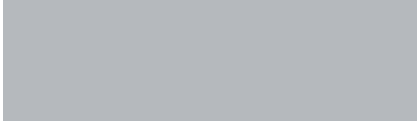
Pantone 422

C0% M0% Y0% K33%

Pantone 424

C0% M0% Y0% K61%

Pantone 285

C89% M43% Y0% K0%

Pantone 269

C78% M100% Y0% K33%

Pantone 2425

C37% M100% Y0% K26%

Pantone 711

C0% M100% Y80% K2%

(!) Take care when using tints of these colours
– **remember visual accessibility.**

Secondary palette

Pantone 109

C0% M10% Y100% K0%

Pantone 456

C0% M15% Y100% K43%

Pantone 5757

C31% M12% Y91% K56%

Pantone 470

C7% M74% Y99% K40%

(!) Take care when using tints of these colours
– **remember visual accessibility.**

How to contact us

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the UK Parliament. Our aim is integrity
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Democracy matters