

Guidance on the design of voter forms and notices

The Commission's [Making your mark](#) guidance is focused on the design of usable and accessible forms and notices that put voters' needs first and enable them to vote confidently, according to their intentions. It provides guidance based on accepted industry good practice and findings from research with the public.

For an overview of good design practice, see [Section 1: Introduction](#) and [Section 2: About this guidance](#).

The guidance specifically covers the following materials:

- [4A: Ballot papers](#)
- [4B: Polling station notices](#)
- [4C: Polling booth notices](#)
- [4D: Supplementary postal voting guidance](#)
- [4E: Postal voting statements](#)

Many of the general principles in the guidance can also be applied to other electoral materials, including poll cards.

Performance standards

As a requirement to meet Performance standards 2a: Polling station set-up, 2b: Producing ballot papers, poll cards and notices and 3a: Producing postal vote stationery, you must ensure that the 'Guidance for voters', 'Instructions for voters', poll cards and postal voting statements are produced in accordance with any example templates that the Electoral Commission has issued or designed in line with the criteria set out under 'Design criteria' below.

Design criteria

The criteria referred to in the performance standards for Returning Officers are set out below, with links to relevant sections of the *Making your mark* guidance.

A: Content and structure

See [Section 3B: Content and structure](#) and [Section 5: Bilingual materials](#)

1. **Font** style and size that is easy to read.
 - a) Poll cards and postal voting materials: Arial 12 point (or equivalent), unless unavoidable. Ensure all **key** information is minimum 12 point.
 - b) Notices (poster size): Arial 26 point (or equivalent).

See [Section 3A, p. 9: font](#) and [Section 6B: Choosing a font](#).

2. **Language:**
- a) plain language that is easy to read and understand¹
 - b) consistent language and terminology used throughout all forms and notices
- See [Section 3A, p.13-15: language](#) and [Section 6E: Writing in plain language](#)

3. Clear **instructions** in a logical order, following the steps of the process.

4. Clear information/signposting about how to **get help**.

5. **Illustrations** used where appropriate to complement written instructions. They should be clear, stand out well, and match the written instructions.

See [Section 3A, p.15: Pictures](#)

B: Style

See [Section 3A: Style](#) and [Section 5: Bilingual materials](#)

6. **Emphasis:**
- a) text broken up into sections by use of headings, different text sizes, and spacing
 - b) bold and block capitals used sparingly

See [6A: Adding emphasis](#)

7. **Uncluttered** layout with sufficient **space** to ensure the text is easily readable.

See [Section 3A, p.10 & 11: Alignment and spacing; p.12 & 13 and layout of text](#) and [6C: Text layout and alignment](#)

¹ Plain language should be used where the relevant legislation allows the form or notice in question to be produced in a form 'to like effect' as the prescribed form. Guidance and instructions notices for use in polling stations are often required to be produced in the prescribed form, and not a form to like effect, so you should ensure you check the specific requirements.