

Medway Council brand guidelines

Version 1.1 - September 2007



■ Introduction

Every day Medway Council communicates with residents, businesses and other organisations. Having a strong and consistent identity for the council raises awareness of our services and can help raise satisfaction among residents.

These guidelines aim to unify our communications so the council appears as a single professional organisation.

The council's Communications Team is responsible for ensuring our visual identity and written style guides are used consistently. If you have any questions please visit <http://connections.medway.gov.uk/brandguidelinestemplates> or phone the Communications Team:

Marketing/branding

Simon Wakeman 01634 332776

Graphic design

Steve Briley 01634 332885

Writing

Fay Coffin 01634 332782

■ Electronic templates

The council has standard templates for use on desktop PCs:

- Microsoft Word documents
- Microsoft Word - letters produced (for printing on headed paper)
- Microsoft Word faxes
- Microsoft Powerpoint
- Email signatures

These templates are available on Connections at <http://connections.medway.gov.uk/brandguidelinestemplates> or from the Communications Team.

■ Contents

Introduction/electronic templates	2
Visual identity style guide	3
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- The council logo and strapline	4
- Alternative versions	5
- Clear space	5
- What not to do with the logo	6
- Other logos	7
- Fonts	8
- Images and photography	9
- Literature templates	10
- Accessibility	15
- Signage/vehicle liveries	17
- Advertising	18
- Stationery	19
Written style guide	20
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- Introduction	21
- Keeping the language simple	22
- A-Z of style	23
- Writing for the web	33
- Plain English examples	34
- Contacts	36

The background is a complex collage. It features a newspaper page with a barcode and some text, a bright yellow textured surface, and various abstract, colorful shapes in shades of red, green, blue, and purple. The overall composition is dynamic and layered.

Visual identity style guide

■ The council logo and strapline

The Medway Council logo and strapline should be used on all communications from the council.

Individual council services and teams should not have their own logo, as this can cause confusion and reduces consistency.

The Medway Council logo consists of a blue river graphic, the words 'Medway Council' and the strapline "Serving You".

The precise position and proportion of all elements of the logo is fixed and must always be reproduced as shown here. The elements must never be re-drawn or modified in any way.

In exceptional circumstances, where vertical space is tight, the strapline may be moved to the left or right of the logo. This must be agreed with Medway Council's Communications Team which can provide suitable artwork.



Standard two blues, colour references are shown in the table below

Colour	Pantone	4 colour process (cmyk)				Web safe colours (rgb)			Hexidecimal
		Cyan	Magenta	Yellow	Black	Red	Green	Blue	
	297	51%	0%	0%	0%	153	206	243	99CEF3
	293	100%	56%	0%	0%	00	102	204	0066CC

Alternative versions

Where possible the Medway Council logo and strapline should be displayed in colour on a flat white background. If the logo is used on a coloured or textured background ensure that the background is tonally even and either sufficiently dark or light so the logo is easily legible.

If the colour logo and strapline are not appropriate, alternative versions are shown here.

The logo should always be reproduced from master artwork available from Medway Council's Communications Team.

Black only



Pantone 293 only



White reversed out



Clear space

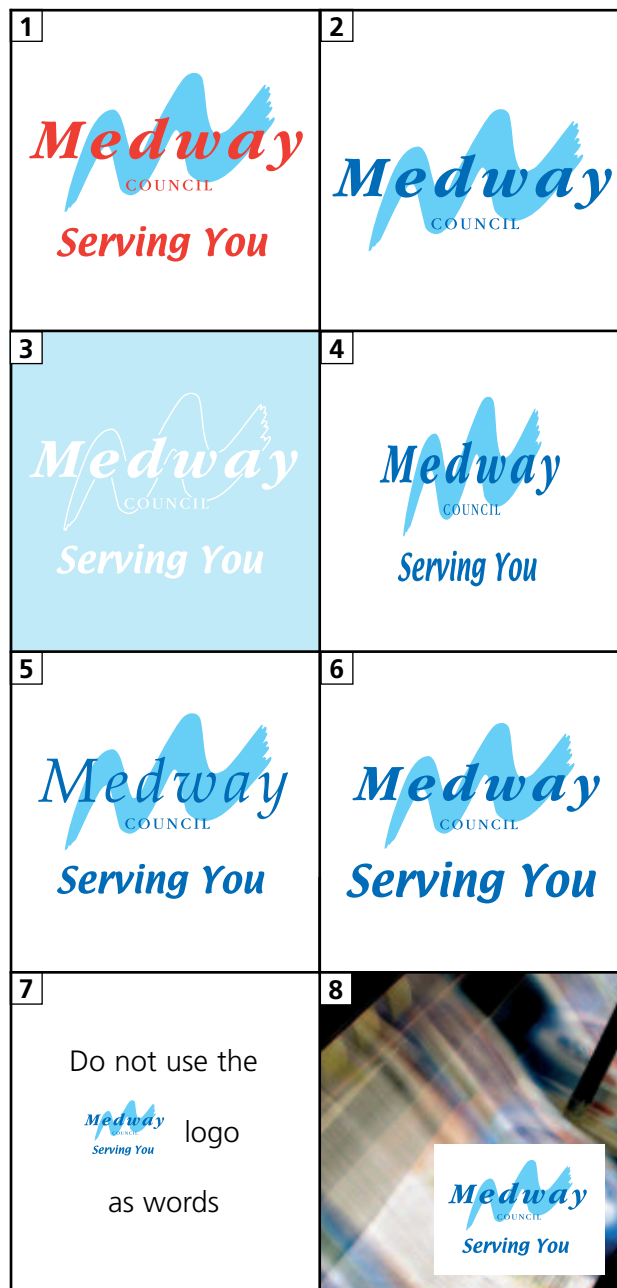
You should ensure adequate clear space around the logo as shown here. This is equivalent to the width of the 'M' in the word Medway. This clear space should be completely clear of typography and any other graphic devices.



■ What not to do with the logo

You must never:

1. change the colour of the logo and strapline;
2. use the logo without the strapline (unless agreed with the Communications Team);
3. place the logo on a background that does not have enough contrast in colours to make it easily visible;
4. distort the logo;
5. change the typefaces;
6. change the proportions of the logo and strapline elements;
7. use the logo and strapline in place of the printed words "Medway Council";
8. Do not put the logo in a white box on top of an image or coloured background - use the correct version of the logo instead.

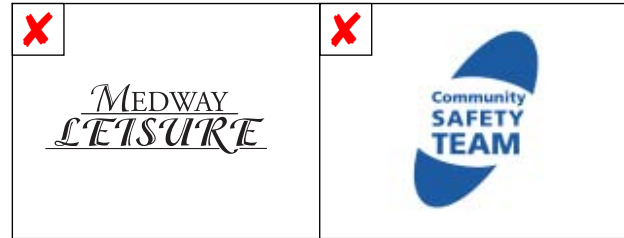


Other logos

Medway Council services or teams

Medway Council teams or services must not have or use their own logos.

Research has shown the most highly-rated councils use a clear single identity. This increases awareness of the range of council services and reduces potential confusion about who is providing the service.



Partnerships

Where a number of partners work together, it may be appropriate to create a new logo to be used in place of the individual partners' logos. If you believe this is necessary you should consult the Communications Team for advice.



Venues and locations

Council venues, such as the Central Theatre or Strood Leisure Centre, can have their own logos. These should be used alongside the Medway Council logo, so it is clear that the facility is provided by Medway Council.



Promotions and campaigns

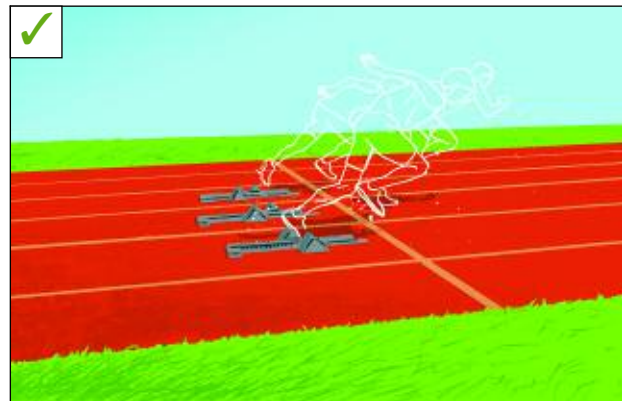
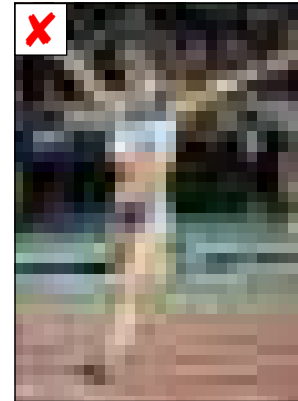
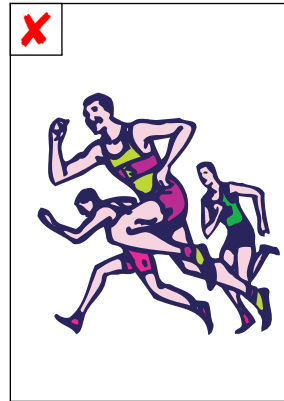
Selected council promotions and campaigns can have their own logos, subject to agreement with the Communications Team. A promotion or campaign is defined as a specific piece of communications activity carried out by Medway Council and, where relevant, its partners. Examples of this are: Tourism marque, Banish Rubbish, Olympics and Fair Trader.



■ Images and photography

Your message will be enhanced by good images and/or photography. The following points may help you and your designer choose the right images:

- Do not use clip art - it is unprofessional.
- If taking your own digital photography make sure your pictures are high resolution.
- Avoid using images saved from the internet. Their resolution is not good enough for use in print. You would also need to get permission to use them - you can't just steal people's images.
- Professional illustration is also a good solution to finding the right image.
- Images should be relevant to your text.
- When using pictures of people make sure they are representative of the community.
- If you are photographing people you need to get them to sign a consent form - these are available from the Communications Team.
- If you are using a photographer, try to get them to take more creative pictures using unusual angles or different techniques.



■ Literature templates

There is a standard template for all printed leaflets and information booklets. This is designed to ensure the council's visual identity is presented in a professional and consistent way, while allowing for a creative design treatment for the document's cover. There are different rules for the council's core and non-core literature.

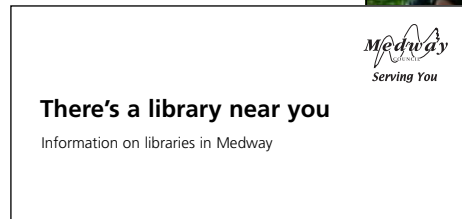
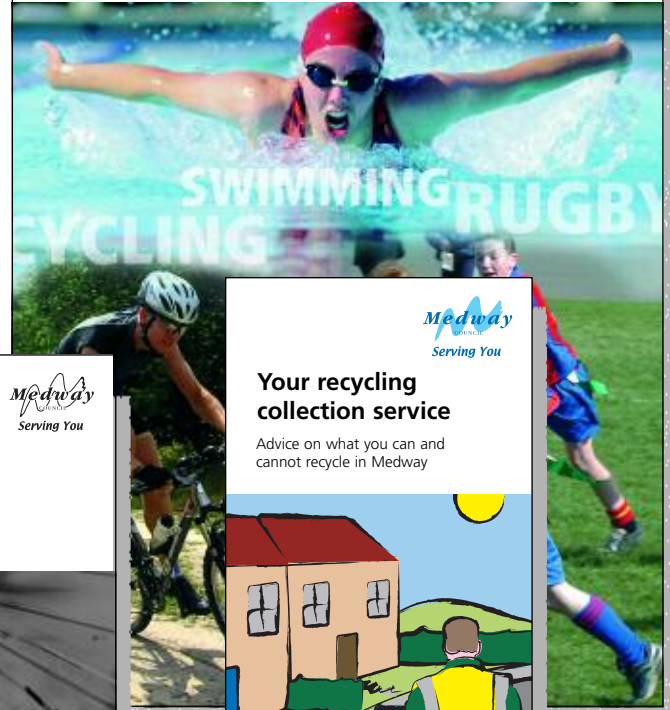
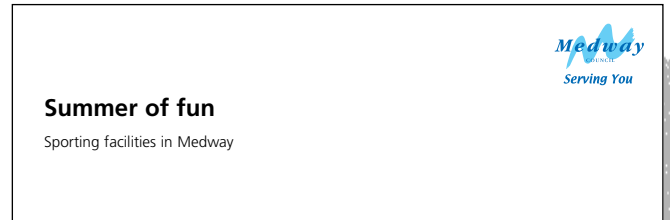
Core literature

The design templates for core literature are intended to introduce a consistent look and feel to the council's permanent printed materials. This is important because it presents a professional image for the council and makes it easy for customers to quickly identify the information they need.

Core literature covers permanent information about council services that we provide.

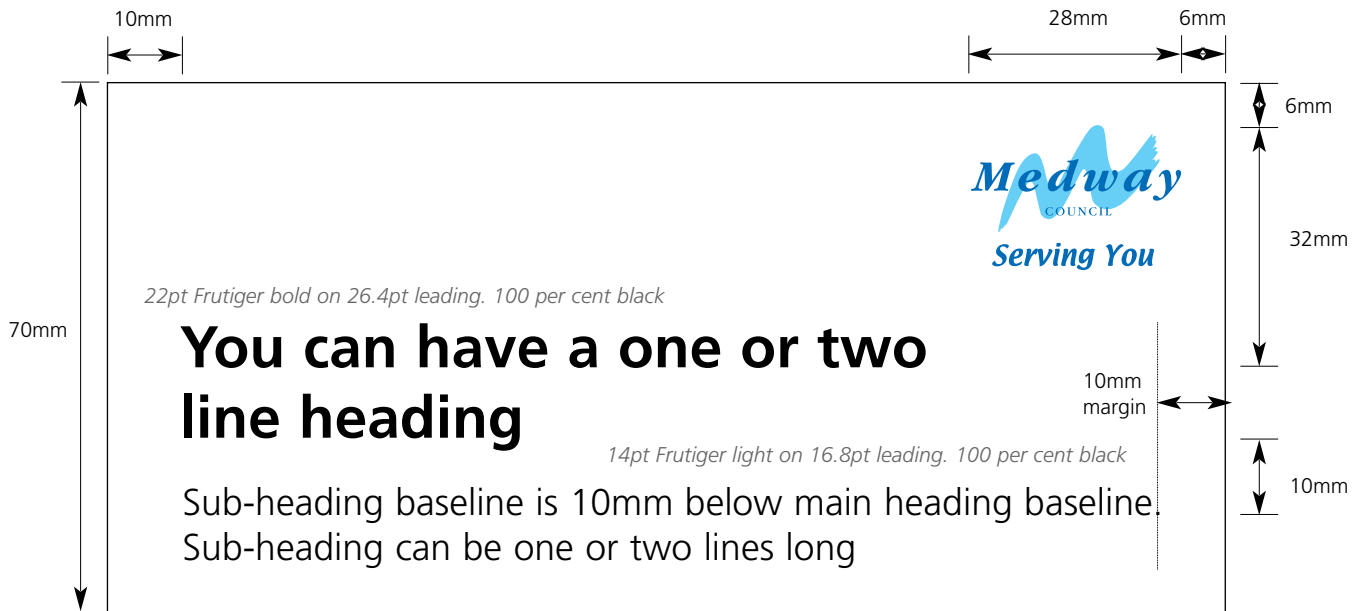
Examples of this would include a leaflet about council tax or social services. It also includes statutory publications, such as the council's performance plan.

It is assumed that printed materials produced by the council are core, unless there is a good case for them to be considered as non-core.



The diagram below outlines how the header on council core literature should be designed. This applies to all formats. The area below the 70mm line is free for a design that should be creative and

eyecatching and suited to the leaflet's subject matter. Design templates are available from the Communications Team. Other logos are not allowed on the cover, they should go on the back page (see section on accessibility).

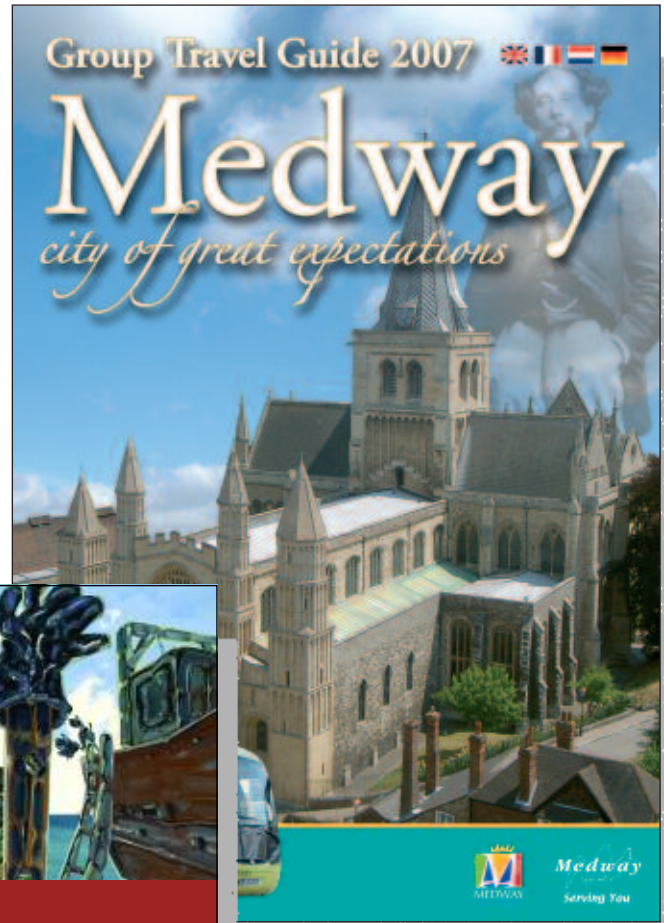


Non-core literature

Non-core literature is promotional information that the council produces to market an event or campaign. The information will have a limited shelf life with a definite start and end date. Materials should be disposed of after the expiry date. Examples would include a brochure for an event or festival, or a leaflet about summer activities in leisure centres.

While council branding remains important on non-core literature, it is lower profile than on core literature. It recognises that these types of materials need to promote council activities more strongly, often in commercially competitive situations.

The final decision on whether literature is core or non-core rests with the council's Communications Team.



The diagram below shows an example of how the logo is used on non-core literature. The logo should always sit on the front of literature, be 28mm wide and have a 6mm clearance around each edge. It can sit in any position horizontally but should be vertically 6mm from either the top or bottom edge.

If the logo is resting on top of an image the part of the image it rests on should be of a sufficient contrast to the logo to make the logo clearly visible.

Make sure the correct logo version is used.

In exceptional cases where the creative treatment does not allow the logo to sit on the front page of literature, it may be placed in alternative positions such as on the back cover or on a prominent inside page. If used in an alternative position the logo must still be 28mm wide and have a 6mm clearance around each edge

17 March > 13 May 2007

Rochester Art Gallery & Craft Case

Visitor Information Centre, First floor, 95 High Street, Rochester, Kent ME1 1LX

Mon - Sat 10am - 5pm Sun 10.30am - 5pm

Free admission www.medway.gov.uk/arts

Mike Scott
'Chai' Wood

6mm

6mm

6mm 28mm 6mm

Medway
COUNCIL
Serving You

ARTS COUNCIL

Partnerships

Where Medway Council works jointly with other organisations, for example with Kent Police or Medway Primary Care Trust, joint publications may be produced. Both organisations may have their own set of brand guidelines.

As an organisation Medway Council would prefer its logo to appear in the bottom corner in the same way as non core literature with adequate clearance from other elements. Partner logos should then sit in a row

beside it. There will be cases where this is not possible, please ask the Communications Team for guidance.

Medway Council's logo should always be equally prominent to its partners.

There will sometimes be cases where all partner logos are replaced by a partnership logo, for example Medway Community Safety Partnership.

The annual report of the Director of Public Health for Medway 2005

Minding the Gap

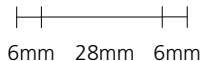
Published 2006



6mm



6mm



■ Accessibility

As a local authority we must ensure the communications we produce are accessible to a wide range of audiences. This is a statutory duty that is placed on the organisation, but is also important in ensuring that we communicate effectively with everyone in Medway. All materials designed for Medway Council should be accessible and be in line with the Royal National Institute for the Blind's clear print guidelines.

Clear print is a design approach which considers the needs of people with sight problems. The overall accessibility of a document depends on the combination of many design elements such as font, type size, contrast and page navigation. We should ensure that people with sight problems can use all the council's literature effectively

Back page

- This panel must sit at the bottom of the back page on all core literature as shown on page 14.
- Any remaining space can be used for other logos or any other content.
- The design and layout of this panel must not change.
- The contact details should be customised to suit the individual leaflet.
- The colours may change as long as the text is of a good, readable contrast to the background.
- A 0.5pt dividing line should sit 5mm above the 'Who to contact' heading.
- All publications must have a Communications Team reference number to enable the council to manage its customer literature efficiently. This is preferably shown on the back page in 5pt Frutiger Roman.

Full size DL panel

5mm

Who to contact



Customer services: 01634 333333
8am to 8pm (Mon-Fri) 9am to 1pm (Sat)
 Please note: Calls to customer services may be recorded or monitored for security and staff development purposes.



**Trading Standards, Medway Council,
 Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham,
 Kent ME4 4TR**



Email: consumer.protection@medway.gov.uk
 Website: www.medway.gov.uk/fairtrader



Minicom: **01634 333111**

This information can be made available
in other formats from **01634 333333.**

If you have any questions about this leaflet and you want to speak to someone in your own language please ring **01634 335577.**

উইলা	331780	ਪੰਜਾਬੀ	331784	اردو	331785
中文	331781	Polski	332373	فارسی	331840
தமிழ்	331782	کوردی	331841	Русский	332374
हिंदी	331783	একুশাষ্ম	331786	Lietuviškai	332372

Printed on recycled paper

GXXX 04 07 Designed by Medway Council's Communications Team. www.medway.gov.uk/communications

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0000 04 07 Designed by Medway Council's Communications Team. www.medway.gov.uk/communications

DL A5
A4

Back page templates showing contact/accessibility panel
For alternative formats please seek advice from the Communications Team.

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 **Trading Standards, Medway Council, Compass Centre, Chatham Maritime, Chatham, Kent ME4 4YH**

 Email: consumer.protection@medway.gov.uk Website: www.medway.gov.uk/fairtrader

 Minicom: **01634 333111**

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0000 04 07 Designed by Medway Council's Communications Team. www.medway.gov.uk/communications

■ Signs

Signs give our customers an easy and quick way to identify a council building or service. They must give a professional and consistent image for the council.

The council has a standard design for signs that is used for most signs (see right). In a few places it may be appropriate to use an alternative design that is more sympathetic to the environment in which the sign is placed. Examples of this could include signs placed in rural or conservation areas.

Please contact the Communications Team for advice and to have your sign professionally designed. All signs must be approved by the Communications Team before they are produced.

Signs should not include team or directorate names as this can lead to them becoming out-of-date.



■ Vehicle liveries

Our vehicles are our presence on Medway's roads. Clearly and consistently branded vehicles mean residents will be able to recognise council vehicles wherever they are and will raise the profile of the council's services.

The most appropriate style of livery depends on the vehicle itself, the service and how the vehicle will be used. Please consult the Communications Team for advise. All vehicle liveries must be designed and approved by the Communications Team before production starts.



■ Advertising

The council uses many different forms of advertising. These can include newspaper adverts, outdoor advertising and on buses.

Adverts should be professionally designed by the Communications Team to ensure they achieve the marketing objective for the advert and are consistent with the council's brand guidelines.

Recruitment adverts should follow the standard template and must be designed by the Communications Team. Recruitment advertising should be booked through the Resourcing Team in Personnel.

Rochester Sweeps Festival 2007 5, 6 & 7 May 2007

◆ Eliza Carthy and the Ratcatchers ◆ Oysterband ◆ Tim Edey Band
 ◆ Colvin Quarmby ◆ Poissons Pilotes (France) ◆ La Zag (Italy)
 ◆ Hot Rats ◆ PLUS The Folk Factor, Ceilidhs, Pub gigs,
 Music sessions, Morris dancing and much more.

www.medway.gov.uk/sweepsfestival

Public rights of way officer
 Ref: RD06905

Salary £18,450 – £24,708 per annum, plus essential car user allowance.

With more than 276 km of rights of way in Medway, we are looking for an experienced, enthusiastic, self-motivated, dedicated and flexible person to deliver the public rights of way (PROW) service in the highways section.

Greater emphasis is being given to this service area. The successful candidate will understand the statutory duties and legislation associated with the public rights of way service.

The post holder will be working on developing the rights of ways in excluded areas of the authority, and reviewing the way PROW's are inspected, recorded and maintained. They will contribute to the implementation of the PROW's improvement plan, as well as being involved in other local PROW projects.

The person we seek will be technically competent and have excellent organisational, communication and people management skills.

Closing date: 29 June 2007. For an informal discussion, please contact Phil Moore, Head of Highways on 01634 331146 or email phil.moore@medway.gov.uk

To apply
 visit www.medway.gov.uk
 call **01634 333333**
 Mon to Fri 8am – 8pm, Sat 9am – 1pm
01634 332843 24-hour answerphone
 email jobs@medway.gov.uk
 quoting the appropriate reference.

Valuing people's differences, recognising their strengths.

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01634 332843 24-hour answerphone
 email jobs@medway.gov.uk
 quoting the appropriate reference.

Valuing people's differences, recognising their strengths.

■ Stationery

The council's stationery is one of the most common branded materials that our customers will see. It's important that all council services use the council's stationery consistently to present a professional image. Council services should not customise or alter corporate stationery.

The three main types of council stationery that are available are:

- A4 letterhead
- DL compliments slips
- Business cards

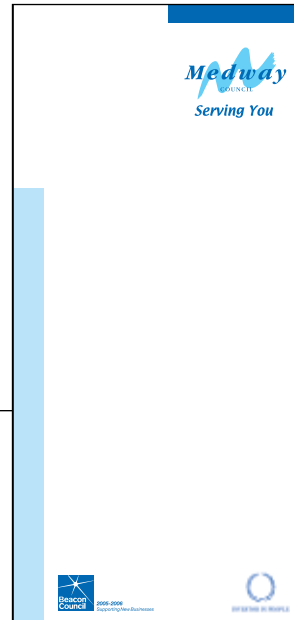
A MS Word template is available for use with the A4 letterhead to ensure letters are laid out consistently and include important information for our customers. This can be downloaded from Connections.

connections.medway.gov.uk/brandguidelines

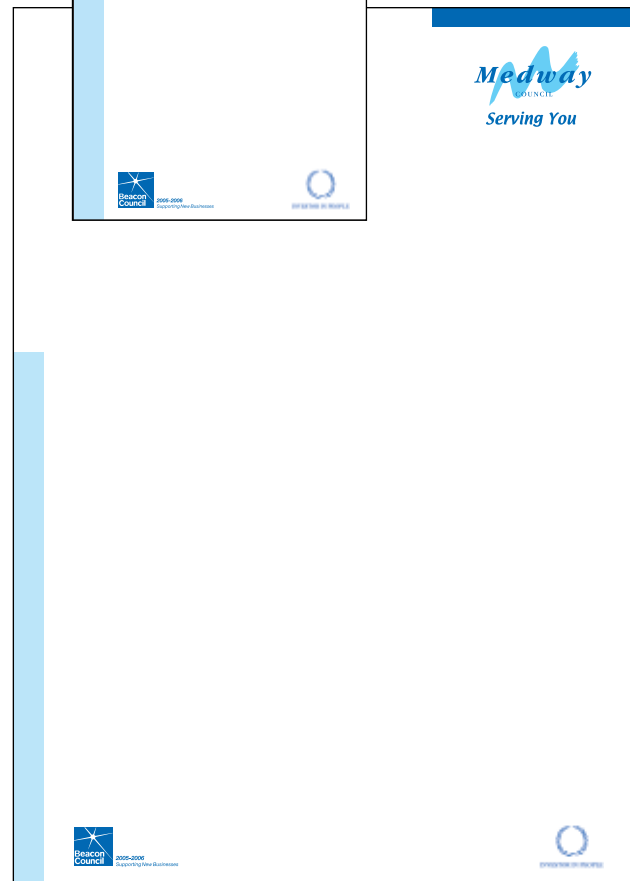
Business card



Compliment slip



Letterhead



A close-up photograph of a typewriter keyboard. The keys are dark grey with white characters. A blue rectangular overlay is positioned in the upper left quadrant, containing the text 'Written style guide' in a light blue, sans-serif font. The background shows several keys, including 'V', 'O', 'D', and 'B'.

Written style guide



■ Introduction

In 1998, when Medway Council was created, a written style guide and comprehensive branding guidelines were produced.

It is right that the written style guide be revisited and updated. Since then we have all come across words or issues that are not included in the guide.

Any such guide should be an evolving tool that is there to help and direct staff working for an organisation. It is restrictive in that it guides how an organisation will present its written information. This can be on printed material such as leaflets, magazines, news releases, posters and exhibition stands, as well as on websites and more.

It is not designed to be stifling – consistent good written style is an extremely important part of how an organisation is branded. A successful written style guide should demand the use of plain English.

The best test when writing something is to ask yourself if an elderly relative or child would understand what you were writing. Don't overcomplicate the text, don't use jargon and most of all, be consistent.

Publishing houses and the media all have their own style guides for the written word. If in doubt, a professional writer will always refer to the guidelines, to a dictionary or to a suitable reference work.

The revised Medway Council written style guide (2007) has drawn on plain English books and written style guides from several organisations, including the *Financial Times* and the *BBC*.

In this 2007 revision of the Medway Council written style guide we have re-ordered the advice, putting entries alphabetically to help make this more useful for all staff.

■ Keeping the language simple

In local government we often use long, impressive-sounding words or specialised terms.

By doing this we often make important information hard to understand. Good writers use plain words.

If you do need to use an unusual or specialised term, explain it.

Keep sentences short to avoid any confusion. If a sentence is long and involved, break it up or rephrase the message until it is clear and easy to understand.

Just think about how frustrated you get if you read something and don't understand it.

Always think before you write for the public - are you saying what you want to say in terms people outside your office will understand? Always get someone to check what you have written before you send it anywhere.

Try to remember:

- use everyday English which is easy to understand;
- be concise and to the point;
- avoid technical terms and jargon unless absolutely essential;
- use correct grammar and punctuation;
- have an average sentence length of 15-20 words, with a maximum length of 35 words;
- try to contain only one idea in each sentence;
- put the 'do-er' early in the sentence. For example, 'the committee decided' is better than 'it was decided that the committee...';
- use clear instructions so that readers understand what they must do. For example, 'please complete this form and return it to...' is better than 'forms should be returned to...';
- help readers by using headings, lists and plain numbering;
- cut out unnecessary phrases and outdated words. For example, 'please contact me if you need help' (seven words) is much better than 'please do not hesitate to contact me in the first instance if you require further information on this matter' (19 words).

■ A-Z of style

Abbreviations

There is no need to put a full stop at the end of the most common abbreviations - Mr, Dr, the Rev, MP, for example.

Use Cllr in the title for a council member, but when referring generally to a councillor or councillors, spell the word in full and do not use a capital C.

Avoid guessing games. Not everyone understands abbreviations and acronyms (words formed from initial letters, such as UNESCO) so spell them out first, with the abbreviation in brackets.

Please don't create your own short forms of words such as hour. Using hr instead doesn't help our readers. Please don't abbreviate days of the week – use Monday, not Mon and Tuesday, not Tues.

Treat acronyms with caution. Some local authorities have become almost military in their use of initials and abbreviations, producing documents that mystify the unfamiliar reader. We don't want to do that.

Acronyms

Keep the acronym as capital letters. 'Medway Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)' becomes 'Medway LSP' after the first reference is written in full.

Do not use full stops between letters – CPA, not C.P.A.

Addresses

Should be written in the following style:

**Name of individual and team or just team name,
Medway Council,
Building name,**

Followed by the rest of the building's Royal Mail postal address with post code

For example Joe Bloggs, Research and Review, Civic Centre, Strood, Medway, Kent ME2 4AU.

There are exceptions to this such as freepost addresses.

Advice/advise

Advice is something given to someone, while advise is generally the verb – "he was advised to take his coat off". You may be given advice by your boss.

Affect/effect

Generally, affect is the verb - "global warming affects the climate". Effect is the noun - the thing that results when something is affected, so the effect of global warming is a change in weather patterns. You have to affect something to create an effect. There are more specialised uses where affect is a noun and to effect something is a verb but these are not likely to appear in council documents for public consumption.

Ages

Please see section on numbers.

Among/while

Not amongst/whilst.

Ampersands (&)

These should only be used where organisations use them as part of their name when a company or organisation is referred to in full and then later abbreviated or in charts and tables to save space.

For example, the Improvement and Development Agency becomes I&DeA.

Americanisms

Please avoid at all costs – use "s" instead of "z" for example in words. So, it's sympathise, not sympathize. It's a good idea to check that your PC's spellcheckers is using English (UK) and not English (US).

Annexe

Use an “e” on the end of the word when talking about a building.

Apostrophes

Don't worry if you are confused by apostrophes. You are not alone; they are one of the most wrongly used pieces of punctuation in the English language.

The reason for this is that an apostrophe can mean one of two things:

- **Possession** - something belonging to someone or something

When it means possession the apostrophe goes after the person or thing possessing, so if the possessor is singular it goes before the “s”, and if plural, after it. So if a ball belongs to a dog, it's is the dog's ball. If it belongs to several dogs, it is the dogs' ball.

Examples: the boy's toy (one boy) or the boys' toys (more than one boy).

So: the family's house, families' houses, residents' association, children's home, managers' seminar.

Where a name ends with “s”, the rule is you add an apostrophe and extra “s” if that is how the word is pronounced and just an apostrophe if the extra “s” is not heard.

Where you have multiple possessives, it's often a case of pulling the stops (or apostrophes) out - so Medway was Dickens and Achilles' favourite city; Mary and Jane's pet poodle (Mary and Jane's pet poodles if they share more than one, but, just to complicate things, Mary's and Jane's pet poodles if they have one each).

Apostrophes are often mistakenly left out when plural units of measure are used. If one week's holiday is

correct, then you should include an apostrophe if you double up and have two weeks' holiday. After all, the apostrophe is there for a fortnight's holiday.

A good test is to look at the singular version and see whether an apostrophe is needed. Of course you can also rewrite the sentence as “going away for three weeks” instead.

There is often confusion between its and it's, which often appear in their wrong form in council documents. 'Its' is the possessive form of 'it' in the same way that your is the possessive form of you and is a complete word in its own right.

• Abbreviation

The abbreviated form of 'it is' includes an apostrophe to indicate the missing second i.

There are other words where an apostrophe is used to indicate missing letters, such as isn't (is not) or can't (cannot). Usually these words should be avoided and the full versions used.

Use the apostrophe to show the plural of single letters - mind your p's and q's.

However, apostrophes are not needed in abbreviations such as MPs, unless indicating possession, as in MP's surgery, or MPs' surgeries. Decades and centuries, such as 1960s, 1800s do not need apostrophes.

Bank holiday

Only use capital letters when the full name of the bank holiday is used, for example May Bank Holiday. If talking about the bank holiday please don't use capital letters.

Banned words

Banned	Please use an alternative such as:
access	be more specific (open, understand, visit)
acquire	Buy, rent, steal
additional	extra
adjacent	next
alleviate	reduce or ease
as a means to	to
assist	help
at the present time / at this moment in time	now
by no later than	by
carriageway / highway	road
comprehensible	easy to understand
consisted of	was or had
evidenced by	use shown by instead
enabling	helping
facilitate	help
facility / amenity	be more specific (the centre, the playing field, the service)
fayre	fair or fare (if you mean food)
in order to	to
in order that	so
in receipt of	getting
meet up with / meet with	meet
ongoing	continuing
persons	people, men, women, children
pre-book	book
prior to	before
purchase	buy
re/regarding	about
so as to	to
unit	building, house, house, home, flat
utilise	use
undertake	carry out, do, build – use the right verb
upcoming	forthcoming
with regard to	about
will be required to	must

Brackets

Brackets should be used sparingly as a signal to a reader in a hurry that the words are of secondary importance. When the end of the bracketed passage coincides with the end of a sentence follow these rules: If the whole sentence or sequence of sentences has been enclosed in brackets the full stop goes before the last bracket (That is all.) If only part of the sentence is in brackets the full stops goes after the bracket. That is all (at least for the time being).

Please do not put brackets around telephone numbers or area codea. It makes it harder for people to read.

Bullet points

Bullet points or lists are a simple way of getting messages across. They usually follow a heading or an introductory phrase ending in a colon.

When the words following the bullet point form a sentence only when read with the introduction:

- end each bullet point with a semicolon;
- start the bullet points with a lower-case letter;
- finish the final bullet point with a full stop.

If each bullet point is followed by a complete sentence, then each sentence needs a full stop. And each sentence should start with a capital letter.

In display material such as posters, information leaflets, charts and display boards you can keep things simple and do it like this:

- leave out the punctuation at the end of each line
- fewer marks make for less clutter
- this gives greater impact and ensures the words stand out.

Capital letters

In local government there is a tendency to use capitals for any word we consider important. Why do we do this?

Too many capitals can confuse the eye and make a document difficult to read.

These are examples of correct use:

- Medway Council, but the council;
- Medway Council's Cabinet, but the council's cabinet;
- Mayor of Medway Cllr XX, but the mayor.

Use capitals for:

- full committee titles - the Regeneration and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee, but the committee;
- full names of government departments – the Department for Communities and Local Government;
- department names – Children's Services, Regeneration and Development;
- job titles – Chief Executive, Transport Manager when the title is followed by a person's name. Use lower case when talking generally, for example 'the chief executive led the way at the conference';
- team/department titles – Regeneration and Development; Children's Services (avoid the use of directorate); Communications Team;
- recognised skills qualifications – NVQ Level 3, Key Stage 2.

Use lower case for:

- the government;
- the south-east;
- seasons - spring, summer, autumn and winter; housing benefit, council tax benefit and income support;
- internet

Chair/chairman

The council's style is to use chair when referring to the chair of a committee.

Commas

Use commas to create a pause in a sentence or long clauses. In a sequence of items do not put a comma before **and** unless leaving it would lead to ambiguity. For example the Bishops of London, Bath and Wells, and Manchester. But the Bishops of London, Winchester and Exeter.

There is no need to use a comma in a short phrase at the start of a sentence. For example 'On 20 June the group revealed...'

Use two commas in sentences such as this: Mr Smith added, however, that Medway was moving fast. Or better still: However, Mr Smith added...

Be aware of how commas can change the context of a sentence. This is a real example from a US newspaper:

Buckingham Palace said that Prince Andrew, son of Queen Elizabeth and a navy helicopter pilot, would sail with the Invincible.

Colons

The colon can often be substituted for 'for example', 'that is' etc.

Our style guide suggests that the word that follows a colon should have a capital letter.

Compare to and compare with

The form you are most likely to need is 'compare with'.. When you compare one thing with another you are examining their similarities and differences. When you compare to, you are likening one to the other, as in the most often quoted: "Shall I compare

thee to a summer's day". Follow the advice of author and language authority Bill Bryson and save the "to" version for poetry and love letters.

Compliment/complement

Often confused in council documents, as in: "the workshop compliments other courses during the week". A compliment is an expression of regard or praise, so in the sentence above, the workshop, in the complimenting the courses, is actually saying nice things about them. The word needed is complements, meaning to fill up or make whole.

Comprised

Comprised - not comprised of. Comprise is a self-contained word meaning contain. Comprise is used when describing how a larger body is broken down into parts, not how the components make up a larger body. Look at: "The management team comprises the chief executive and six directors" and "the chief executive and six directors comprise the management team". The first one is correct. If in doubt use made or make up of, or form.

Contacts

When giving contact details for an organisation or individual please write out phone, email or fax. Please don't use t: e: f: Please use phone, not telephone or tel. Symbols are acceptable, for example ☎ 01634...

Dashes

Dashes are useful for inserting important information into a sentence, as long as the flow of the sentence is not interrupted. For example, Medway Council, Medway Primary Care Trust and Medway NHS Trust – but not Kent Police – are taking part in the action plan.

Avoid: Medway Council, Medway Primary Care Trust and Medway NHS Trust – Kent Police are not taking part – are creating an action plan.

Dates

Keep it simple - 1 April, or 1 April, 2006 or Monday, 1 April or Monday, 1 April 2006 (note order: day, month, year). Please do not use 'th' at the end of date. For example, 26th January should be 26 January.

Double spaces between words and sentences

Let's be consistent in the way we supply documents to our customers, both internally and externally. Avoid double spacing between words and sentences.

Enquire/enquiry

You can use enquire/enquiry or inquire/inquiry

Equality issues

It's best to avoid words that are sex-specific. It is too easy to make sweeping - and potentially offensive - assumptions that stereotype people by gender.

So, it's best to use headteacher, police officer, firefighter and clergy.

Exclamation marks (!)

These have no place in well-written text unless - and this is very rare - an exclamation is used. An exclamation is a short expression of surprise, shock or anger. Wow! Help! You surprise me!

When exclamation marks are used correctly there should only be one. When they are used incorrectly, the addition of two or three does not make a sentence any funnier, more shocking or effective.

On the whole, the council style guide's advice is don't use exclamation marks.

Fewer/less

Fewer refers to numbers. For example fewer books, fewer children.

Less refers to quantity. For example less than £100, less than a quarter.

Focused/targeted

Not focussed or targetted

Forums, consortiums (but still data, millennia)

Many Greek and Latin words have become part of the English language and however much it offends classical scholars, the English usage is correct style. Most dictionaries now offer the "s" version as preferred plural. Fora has been creeping into council use as a singular word, which, of course, it is not. Note that data is a plural word and should be used with plural verbs, as in "data are".

Headteacher

One word, not two

Helpline

One word, not two

Height

Use figures with abbreviations - 5ft, 2in and put the metric equivalent in brackets afterwards.

High Street

Please use capital letters for the start of High and Street when referring to the names of actual streets, but lower case for 'high street shops'.

Historic/historical

Historic means famous in history, historical means belonging to history.

Hyphens

No two sets of rules agree on the use of hyphens. Our advice is to keep hyphens to a minimum and use them only when absolutely necessary.

Although a compound noun such as build-up may be hyphenated, do not hyphenate the verb to build up or many others like it. Similarly, 'up-to-date figures' should include hyphens but the 'figures are up to date' should not.

Adverbs linked to verbs should not be hyphenated unless there is a risk of ambiguity. So a closely guarded secret does not need a hyphen. You do need to be aware that the adverb could be mistaken for an adjective. A 'little used car' is not the same as a 'little-used car', nor is a 'hard working man' the same as a 'hard-working man'.

Only on rare occasions should a second hyphen be included, such as 12-year-olds. Often now the hyphen can be left out of words that start with re or pre, except where another e follows. For example re-entry and pre-empt but reopen and preconceive. The same is true for 'co' except where another "o" follows: Co-ordination but coaxial.

These examples of hyphenated words may help you:

- Well-being
- 24-hour
- World-class
- First-class
- Anti-social
- One-hour, two-hour etc
- Nine to 12-year-olds
- Term-time

These words, among many others, don't have hyphens in our style guide:

- Email (at the start of a sentence it should be capped up. In the middle of a sentence start email with a lower case "e")
- Online
- enewsletter
- First aid
- Vice chair

Italics

Please use these for the name of books, films, songs, operas, newspapers, magazines or TV programmes etc. Please do not place such titles inside single inverted commas. Please do not use italics on bills or acts of parliament.

Medway

Just Medway. Not Medway Towns or the towns, shorthand descriptions coined when local government for the area was shared between three authorities. Just saying Medway helps with the council's goal of Putting Medway on the Map.

Medway Council serves Medway, one of the largest urban areas in the south-east outside London and identified as the city for the Thames Gateway.

If you need to refer to a part of Medway (Strood, Rochester, Chatham, Gillingham, Rainham, Hoo Peninsula, Medway valley or parts of them) do so by name.

Misspelled words

Here is a list of some of the most misunderstood, misused, abused and misspelled words in the language. Please just use plain English:

Adverse/Averse. In the sense “I am not averse to a glass of wine” but adverse in the sense of adverse weather.

Ambidextrous. Not – terous.

Beleaguered. Note the “u”.

Benefitting. Should be spelt with double “t”.

Borne. Means carried, born comes later.

Canvas. Painters paint on one.

Canvass. Politicians seek people’s views when they do this.

Discreet. Means using discretion.

Discrete. Means separate, distinct.

Empower. There’s no “n”. N-Power is something to do with electricity.

Exorbitant. There’s no “h”.

Faze. If you are fazed by something, it might baffle you. It could be a phase you’re going through.

Flak. As in the jacket and there’s no “c” in it.

Fluorescent. Note the “u”.

Forego. Means to go before, not to be confused with:

Forgo. Means to go without.

Haemorrhage. Is a frequently mistyped word.

Handiwork. not handywork.

Harass. Has one “r” and two “ss”.

Hear, hear! Is the exclamation, not here, here!

Hindrance. Not hinderance.

Hot-desking. Please note the hyphen.

Led. Is the past tense of the verb to lead. He led the charge.

Licence. The noun has a “c”. It’s a driving licence but License is the verb so he’s licensed to drive.

Mischievous. Not mischievious.

Naught. Is what our fruitless efforts come to. Nought is the figure.

Peddle. Is what peddlers do. **Pedal.** Is what cyclists do.

Peninsula. Is the noun (the Hoo Peninsula) and peninsular is the adjective: the peninsular war.

Pore, pour, poor. You might pore over a book, pour yourself a drink and worry about the poor who are always with us.

Premises are always plural. There is no such building as a business premise.

Prescribe, proscribe. The first is to suggest, the second to ban. A doctor might prescribe cough syrup and proscribe smoking.

Prophecy, prophesy. Like licence, the “c” is in the noun, the “s” in the verb.

Rapt. As in attention should not be confused with wrapped.

Refute. Is frequently misused to mean deny. It does not. If someone refutes an allegation it means proves it to be wrong not just says it’s wrong.

Restaurateur. The word for someone who owns a restaurant.

Sleight. As in sleight of hand means something quite different from slight as in small or slim.

Supersede. Is often misspelled with a “c”.

Targetting. Should be spelt with double “t”.

Tortuous, torturous. The former means twisting and turning like the country lanes; the latter involves pain.

Workplace: It’s one word, not two.

Workstation. Is one word not two.

If in doubt, always use your English spellchecker.

Money

Avoid clutter. If it is a round figure, leave out the zero. So £2, but £2.05;

Sums of money – should be written only following the general numbers guide, for example three pence, 10pence (no space). The only exception to this should be on posters or material where a list is needed.

If you are writing million or billion, no space should be left between the number and the unit of money such as £3million.

Please remember to use commas in money. For example, £100,000, not £1000000. It has to be easy for people to read.

Numbers

Generally in written text, it should be one to nine in words, 10 upwards as figures. For example, nine to 12-year-olds.

There are some exceptions to this, most notably Key Stage 1, 2, 3 and 4. The reason? This is a nationally recognised standard/brand and the same is true for other brands that use figures in numbers.

Year groups at school should be written as numbers, for example Year 1, Year 2 etc.

First, second, third etc should be written out until ninth, 10th and above should be in figures – keeping our style consistent with general number use.

Fractions are hyphenated when written out: Two-thirds. It's not advisable to mix fractions with decimals. Try to avoid starting a sentence with a figure. If you have to do so write the number in words, but if possible rephrase the sentence to avoid this.

Million should be written out in full in all references, unless it is in a table or chart when "m" can be used.

The same is true for billions and trillions. So in a sentence it should be £22million.

Use a comma in 1,000 but not in the year, 2000. In text please avoid starting a sentence with a number, but if you do please spell the number out in full. This applies to all numbers.

In listings, tables, bullet points or when numbers are used by themselves all numbers must be digits and not words. For example. 9 to 12-year-olds.

Ongoing

Please avoid.

On to

On to, not onto

Per cent

Per cent should be written out (two words). The % sign should not be used unless it is in a table and per cent would not fit or look foolish.

Phone numbers

No brackets around telephone numbers as mentioned before and no rogue spacing between digits of a phone number – so 306000, not 30 60 00.

Mobile phone numbers have five-figure codes, plus a six-figure customer number. So it should be 07766 465775, not 07766465775. Most people find it difficult to read a number more than six digits long.

Practice/practise

There is sometimes confusion between practice, the noun, and practise (verb), which is what you do at a practice. An easy way of checking the correct form is to substitute advice (noun) and advise (verb), where the difference in pronunciation makes it clearer.

Principle/principal

A principle is a concept, truth, rule or ideal on which actions and behaviour are based. "We have agreed it in principle." "They refused to gamble, because it was against their principles". Principal means chief or most important. It can be used to describe something - "our principal source of income" and also refers to the highest post - "the principal of the college".

Queen

In the first instance please use Her Majesty, the Queen or Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. In all subsequent references please use the Queen.

Quotation marks

Our house style is to use double quotes to indicate reported speech, for example words that someone actually said. The exception is in headings or headlines, when single quotes are preferable. If possible avoid quotation marks in headings. Single quotation marks should be used for quotes within quotes.

A popular, but misguided, convention is to put quotes around a word or phrase to show there is something about it the writer is not comfortable with. Often single quotes are put round these words or phrases, to distinguish them from proper quotations. It's just not necessary and can make it really hard for the reader to understand. It can also suggest laziness by the writer, giving the writing an amateurish appearance. Avoid buzzwords and phrases and if you are not happy about the word you are using, find another.

If you're writing and use the name of a book, TV programme or film for example, these should be written in italics.

Ranks

When talking about ranks in the police, fire service or army, for example, please use the rank in full the first time it is referred to and then abbreviated after that. So, Superintendent John Smith would become Supt John Smith. PC is unusual in that it is referred to as PC in the first instance, but Sergeant becomes Sgt after the first mention. If in doubt please ask the Communications Team.

School holidays

In 2005 Medway Council agreed that it would be using the six-term year. That means there are no longer half-term school holidays. Instead when referring to school holidays the following terms should be used:

Was	Now
Christmas holiday	Christmas break
February half-term	February break
Easter holiday	Spring break
May half-term	May break
Summer holiday	Summer break
October half-term	Autumn break

Semicolons (;)

This is useful if you have a series of clauses running one after the other and want to give more emphasis than by using commas. It is also helpful when using a long list of items in a sentence or paragraph, breaking the text for the reader to be able to appreciate it's a list. They are not interchangeable with colons.

Temperatures

At Medway we use Celsius and not Fahrenheit. So in written terms text would look like this: 24C

Time

Use 12-hour time only. Please avoid use of the 24-hour clock as the reader has to then sit there and work it out. Avoid unnecessary zeroes. Do not put 9.00am, just use 9am, 11am, but do use 11.15pm, 12noon, 3.30pm, midnight. Please do not use 12midday or 12midnight.

Traffic wardens

In Medway we have parking attendants and not traffic wardens. Make sure you define which kind of warden they are. Medway also has community safety wardens – be sure which one you are talking about.

Weights and measures

This is a tricky one because the UK is not consistent in its use of metric or imperial terms. For the Medway Council style guide we have adopted the following approach:

When measuring distance please use miles with the kilometre equivalent in brackets afterwards.

When measuring area please use hectares or metres squared with the acres equivalent afterwards.

Please use grams and kilograms, not the imperial way of pounds and ounces. The abbreviations ‘g’ and ‘kg’ can be used, such as 15g or 2kg. Use a space between a number and a spelled-out unit, such as 12 grams or 19 kilogramns.

Petrol is now sold in litres so please use this term for petrol and diesel and where possible for other liquid measurements. There are some notable exceptions to this (there always is) and that is for items like pints of beer.

Use metres and centimetres for measurements (height is the only exception to this – please see previous entry).

Widows

In a paragraph of text please don’t leave a single word overhanging in a line of its own.

Workplace

One word, not two

Years

Please use 2005/06, not 2005/2006 or 05/06.

Writing for the web

All the above applies when writing a web page. There are, however, a couple more things to remember when preparing text for publication online.

Underlining

Please don’t underline anything on a web page except links. As the reader scans the page the underlining indicates the links helping them to stand out and aiding navigation to the information the visitor is looking for. It also looks more professional to bold up type in printed materials rather than underline.

Upper case text

Please don’t write headings or anything else in upper case. Most people find reading on a screen more difficult, UPPER CASE MAKES IT HARDER STILL.

Linking to other web pages

If you are linking to a page on a different website, please put the link beneath the full URL but also tell people where the link is taking them to: “The Kent Energy Centre can help with discounted loft and cavity wall insulation

www.kentenenergycentre.org.uk”

■ Plain English examples

Here are some genuine examples of poor complicated English and plain English created by Medway Council. The guide does not look to ridicule individuals but wants to demonstrate the importance of good English.

These examples have been collected from the council's website, external information for residents and internal emails.

It did say:

"c) If the absence continues or is expected to continue to last for eight days or more including weekends and rest days (for both full time and part time employees), the employee must contact their doctor in order that they be certified unfit for work. This must be forwarded to the Line Manager who will record and forward to the Directorate Personnel/Payroll Section (as agreed locally within your Directorate)."

It could have said:

If the absence continues or is expected to continue for eight days or more, including weekends and rest days, the employee must contact their doctor so they can be declared unfit for work. This includes part and full-time staff. The certificate must be sent to the line manager who will record it and send to personnel/payroll.

At the beginning of this guide we talked about long sentences. The sentence below is just way too long.

It did say:

Funded by the European Social Fund (ESF), the project aims to raise employment rates, increase the number of older people's access to learning, prevent premature unemployment and promote better age management strategy in recruitment, retraining and retention of employees by matching the skills of older workers with employers needs, providing training and support to raise skill levels, and to investigate, in order to overcome, the barriers associated with the employment of older workers.

It could have said:

The project is funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). It aims to raise employment rates, increase older people's access to learning and prevent premature unemployment. It also retrains and retains employees. It matches the skills of older workers with employers' needs, providing training and support to raise skill levels. The scheme investigates the barriers associated with the employment of older workers in a bid to overcome them.

(You may notice that the words "promote better age management strategy" are missing. That is because no one would know what they meant. If you're ever writing and unsure what a phrase means, go back to the person who supplied the words and ask them to explain. If they can't explain it in terms people would understand – leave it out)

We often use lots of words when just a few will do and in plain English:**It did say:**

ICT have identified a number of Desktop and Laptop machines that require updating. The machines affected relate to the operating system not having the correct service pack. It is our intention to update these machines at staggered intervals to keep network traffic to a minimum. However, this service pack is extremely large and can take anywhere from 30 minutes to 2 hours to install depending on location and network traffic. We will endeavour to e-mail the affected users prior to the update but under certain circumstances, i.e. people not logging onto their normal machine, further notification will not be forthcoming. If the machine requires updating, an on screen message will appear indicating the update is in progress. During this period you will not be able to logon and the machine will reboot automatically. It is essential that you do not switch off your machine during this time as critical operating system files are being copied and updated. As stated, this can be an extremely lengthy process and we thank you for your patience whilst this procedure is being implemented.

It could have said:

Some desktop and laptop machines need updating because they don't have the most up-to-date software. We will be carrying out this work at staggered intervals. It may take up to two hours at each machine.

We will try to email people affected before we carry out the work. If your machine needs updating you will get an on-screen message that tells you an update is taking place. When this is happening you will not be able to log on and your machine will automatically reboot. Please do not switch off your computer when the update is being done, as it will affect installation. Thanks for your co-operation.

And finally...

The English language can be a confusing beast and as mentioned at the start of this revised style guide, organisations all have their own variations on the English language through their style guides.

So, while you may not agree with everything that you see on these pages this is the style guide that the council has adopted and which we all need to work within. Happy writing.



Who to contact

-  **Communications Team: 01634 332776**
-  **Communications, Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent ME4 4TR**
-  Email: communications@medway.gov.uk Website: www.medway.gov.uk/communications
-  Minicom: **01634 333111** Intranet: <http://connections.medway.gov.uk/communications>

This information can be made available in other formats from **01634 332776**

If you have any questions about this leaflet and you want to speak to someone in your own language please ring **01634 335577**

উৎলা	331780	ગુજરાતી	331782	ਪੰਜਾਬੀ	331784	کوردی	331841	اروو	331785	Русский	332374
中文	331781	हिंदी	331783	PolSKI	332373	ଓଡ଼ିଆ	331786	فازى	331840	Lietuviškai	332377