

The
Electoral
Commission

Identity guidelines

These identity guidelines are designed to help you understand the Electoral Commission brand positioning and attributes, and how they are expressed through the corporate identity. By following them, you will play an integral part in building and maintaining the Electoral Commission's reputation as an independent authority.

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Introduction

Who we are and how we present ourselves

What is the Electoral Commission?

We are an independent body set up by the UK Parliament. Our aim is integrity and public confidence in the democratic process. We regulate party and election finance and set standards for well-run elections.

Our identity

The way our organisation looks is a direct reflection of what we stand for and our ambitions for the future. In order that our message remains clear and unambiguous, our identity needs to be managed properly.

For this to happen, each of the basic elements which create our visual identity must be protected. These identity guidelines give you the information you need to understand our identity and how it should be used. Always refer to them when working on Commission reports and other professionally typeset publications.

Our descriptions, aim and objectives



Organisation description

Standard version

We are an independent body set up by the UK Parliament. Our aim is integrity and public confidence in the democratic process. We regulate party and election finance and set standards for well-run elections.

Expanded version

We are an independent body set up by the UK Parliament. Our aim is integrity and public confidence in the democratic process, we:

- register political parties
- make sure people understand and follow the rules on party and election finance
- publish details of where parties and candidates get money from and how they spend it
- set the standards for running elections and report on how well this is done
- make sure people understand it is important to register to vote, and know how to vote

Aim and objectives

Aim

Integrity and public confidence in the UK's democratic process

Objectives

We focus our activities and resources to achieve:

Objective 1 – Transparency and integrity in party and election finance

Objective 2 – Well-run elections, referendums, and electoral registration

Our brand positioning and attributes

Democracy matters

Democracy is the basis of our society. We protect our political and social foundations by protecting a free and fair electoral process. We serve voters by encouraging full participation in the process.

Independent yet interdependent, we are a vital element in protecting the way of life of the nation.

We are:

- approachable and communicative
- proactive, innovative and authoritative
- impartial and independent
- trustworthy and have integrity

1.0

Logos and
straplines

1.1

Colours

Colour is key to our visual identity. It instantly adds impact, but more importantly, consistent use of specific colours creates ownership and builds powerful associations with our organisations.

The primary colour palette is derived from the Electoral Commission logo. It consists of EC dark blue and EC light blue and needs to form the basis of all applications. Tints of primary colours may be used for background colour, panels, charts and diagrams, and to complement a solid colour. Recommended percentages have been specified opposite to provide sufficient contrast between different percentages of tints.

Although not a specified colour, white plays a key role in creating clarity and breathing space across all applications. White represents the transparency that is key to the Commission's aims. The use of white ensures communications are clear, compelling and uncluttered; for example, using an area to hold the logo on the front cover of literature.

A set of highlight colours have been developed as an extension of our corporate colour palette. They have been chosen to complement our corporate colours not to replace or work against them. Only one of these colours should be used per application. Do not use tints of highlight colours. Their use with typography should be limited to headings. They should not appear in body copy.

The neutral colour palette has been carefully considered and developed to complement the primary palette. These neutral colours may be used effectively as solid backgrounds to give greater impact to communications material.

As a guideline, the colours should be applied in the following order: first white space; then one or both primary colours; then, if required, a highlight colour and/or a neutral.

For examples of the colour combinations in operation, see section 3.

The use of highlight colours is optional and they have no fixed relationship with any particular activity or sub division of the Electoral Commission.

Where primary colours are used with highlight colours, do not tint the primary colours.

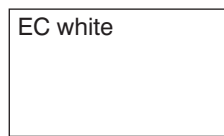
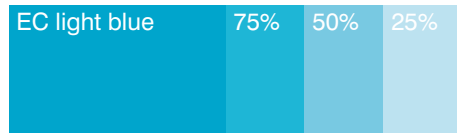
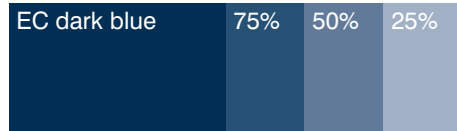
Primary colours should not overlay highlight colours. For example, it would be incorrect to use EC dark blue over an orange highlight background.

When it is not possible to print a special PANTONE colour, use the table – see opposite for the recommended cyan, magenta, yellow and black (CMYK) breakdowns. Always use correct specification to achieve the most accurate match.

Red, green and blue (RGB) values specify colours for screen-based applications. The Natural Colour System (NCS) and RAL are the colour references used when specifying colours for paint or vinyl.

It is important to always use the relevant matching system to ensure consistency of colour across different applications.

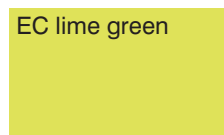
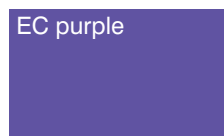
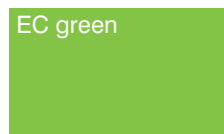
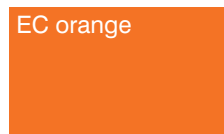
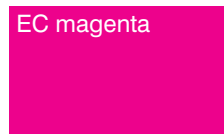
Primary colour palette



Primary colour palette colour breakdowns

Pantone 540 (U)	RGB R000 G051 B102	NCS S 5540-R90B
CMYK C100 M47 Y0 K47	Hexidecimal 00 33 66	RAL 5003
Pantone 632 (U)	RGB R000 G153 B204	NCS S 2055-B10G
CMYK C76 M0 Y15 K11	Hexidecimal 00 99 CC	RAL 5012
Pantone White	RGB R255 G255 B255	NCS S 0500-N
CMYK C0 M0 Y0 K0	Hexidecimal 00 00 00	RAL 9010

Highlight colour palette

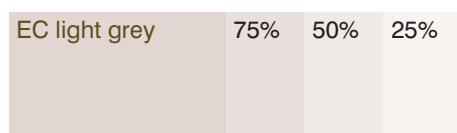
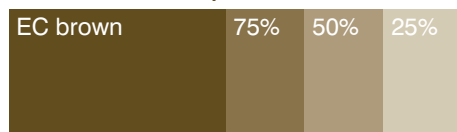


Highlight colour palette colour breakdowns

Pantone 226 (U)	RGB R204 G000 B102	
CMYK C5 M100 Y10 K0	Hexidecimal CC 00 66	
Pantone 165 (U)	RGB R255 G99 B25	
CMYK C0 M72 Y100 K0	Hexidecimal FF 63 19	
Pantone 376 (U)	RGB R122 G184 B0	
CMYK C59 M0 Y100 K0	Hexidecimal 7A B8 00	
Pantone 814 (U)	RGB R134 G113 B172	
CMYK C73 M77 Y2 K0	Hexidecimal 86 71 AC	
Pantone 809 (U)	RGB R225 G228 B0	
CMYK C18 M3 Y90 K0	Hexidecimal E1 E4 00	

The colours shown throughout these guidelines have not been evaluated by Pantone, Inc for accuracy and may not match the PANTONE Color Standards. Consult current PANTONE Publications for accurate color. PANTONE is the property of Pantone, Inc.

Neutral colour palette



Neutral colour palette colour breakdowns

Pantone Black 4 (U)	RGB R051 G051 B051	NCS S 8010-Y50R
CMYK C0 M28 Y91 K100	Hexidecimal 33 33 33	RAL 8014
Pantone Warm Gray 2 (U)	RGB R204 G204 B204	NCS S 1502-Y
CMYK C0 M6 Y6 K12	Hexidecimal CC CC CC	RAL 9018

The PANTONE MATCHING SYSTEM is a worldwide printing, publishing and packaging color language for the selection, marketing and control of colour.

1.2

Logo and strapline variants

Each of the logos and straplines comes in different colour versions to allow them to be adapted to a variety of purposes.

Logo variants

Each of the logos is available in multiple versions for different purposes.

A – Colour logo

The colour logo can be reproduced from two Pantone colours or from process colour (CMYK) breakdowns for printed media. The logo has also been created in RGB for screen-based applications, such as PowerPoint.

The
Electoral
Commission

A – Colour logo

Available in spot colour, CMYK or RGB

B – Black logo

The black logo may be used for laser printed output, e.g. fax and low resolution print (press advertising).

C – White logo

The white logo may be used on colour or photographic backgrounds. It should also be used where legibility of the full-colour logo could be compromised.

The
Electoral
Commission

B – Black logo

Available in CMYK or RGB

The
Electoral
Commission

C – White logo

Available in CMYK or RGB

Strapline variants

The straplines are available in two colours for use on different backgrounds.

A – Colour strapline

The colour (EC dark blue) strapline can be reproduced from a Pantone colour or from process colour (CMYK) breakdowns for use on white or light backgrounds.

Democracy matters

A – Colour strapline

Available in spot colour or CMYK

B – White strapline

The white strapline may be used on colour or photographic backgrounds. It should also be used where legibility of the full-colour strapline could be compromised.

Democracy matters

B – White strapline

Available in CMYK

1.3

The logo and strapline families

The Electoral Commission logo, the Boundary Committee for England logo and the 'Democracy matters' strapline are central to the visual identity.

Each logo and strapline not only identifies the organisation, it also represents everything the organisation stands for.

The logo and strapline families are based on the primary corporate colour palette. The lettering has been created from specially drawn characters, which have been carefully aligned with one another. The relationship between the lettering is fixed and should never be manipulated or adjusted. Do not attempt to re-create the lettering or adjust their alignment. Always use the master artwork provided when reproducing a logo or strapline.

If using multiple logos, such as on bilingual materials, always ensure that all logos receive equal treatment, and none is larger or more prominent than any other.

Please note that separate branding guidelines apply for materials co-branded with other organisations. These should be consulted whenever such materials are being produced.

The
Electoral
Commission

The Electoral Commission logo

Y
Comisiwn
Etholiadol

The Welsh Electoral Commission logo

An
Comisean
Taghaidh

The Scottish Gaelic Electoral Commission logo

Democracy matters

The 'Democracy matters' strapline

Mae democratiaeth yn cyfrif

The Welsh 'Democracy matters' strapline

1.4

Applying the logos

To maximise the impact of our logos, they should always appear prominently and legibly.

Standard logo sizes have been created for use with different page formats. Always use logos at the correct size for the relevant format.

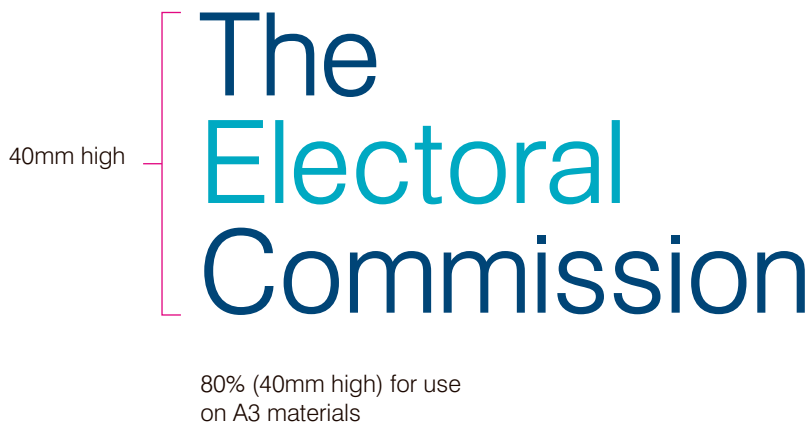
All A4 formats use the logos at 60% (30mm high for Electoral Commission logos, 40mm high for the Boundary Committee logo), while larger documents, such as A3 newsletters, use the logos at 80% (40mm and 50mm high, respectively). The minimum size the logos are to be used is 30% (15mm and 20mm high, respectively).

Always scale the logos using the master artwork. Do not manipulate or alter them in any way.

Wherever possible, logos should appear in the top right-hand corner in all applications. They should be placed equidistant from the top and right-hand edges. However, on certain applications such as above the line advertising it may be necessary for logos to appear in the bottom right hand corner. No other position is allowed.

The clear space zone is measured using multiples of the height of the 'n' of 'Commission'. This space has been included as a non-printing element in all digital master artwork. Never put any other graphic element or text within this space. This is the minimum distance logos should be placed from the edge of a page.

To maximise the legibility of the logo on second party material, a larger clear space zone should be used. See example below.



The
Electoral
Commission

60% (30mm high) for use on A4 materials

The
Electoral
Commission

40% (20mm high) for use on A5 materials

The
Electoral
Commission

30% (15mm high) for minimum use



Minimum clear space zone



Increased clear space zone, for use on second party materials, e.g. advertising campaigns

1.5 Applying the straplines To maximise the impact of the 'Democracy matters' strapline, it should always appear prominently and legibly.

Standard strapline sizes have been created for use with different page formats. Always use straplines at the correct size for the relevant format.

All A4 formats use the straplines at 60%, while larger documents, such as A3 newsletters, use the straplines at 80%. A5 formats should use the strapline at 40%. These sizes are such that the English-language strapline should appear at the same width as the word 'Commission' of the logo, as shown below. Welsh materials should also use the strapline at the same percentages, but the 'same width' rule will not apply as the Welsh strapline is wider than the English.

Wherever possible, the straplines should appear in the bottom left-hand corner in all applications. They should be placed equidistant from the bottom and left-hand edges. If placed in another corner, they should still be equidistant from the nearest two edges.

The clear space zone is measured using multiples of the height of the 'e' of 'Democracy'. This space has been included as a non-printing element in all digital master artwork. Never put any other graphic element or text within this space. This is the minimum distance the logos should be placed from the edge of a page.

Democracy matters

80% for use on A3 materials

Democracy matters

60% for use on A4 materials

Democracy matters

40% for use on A5 materials



Minimum clear space zone

The
Electoral
Commission

Democracy matters

The logo and strapline should be presented at the same percentage – thus the same width

Y
Comisiwn
Etholiadol

Mae democratiaeth yn cyfrif

The Welsh logo and strapline should be presented at the same percentage

1.6

Universal grid

To maintain a consistent visual style across all publications, a standard layout grid has been developed. All literature design is based on the same grid, providing consistency for positioning the logo, text and imagery.

Constructing the grid

The grid has been set up for A4 portrait formats, as illustrated, but it may be adapted for larger or smaller publications, as required.

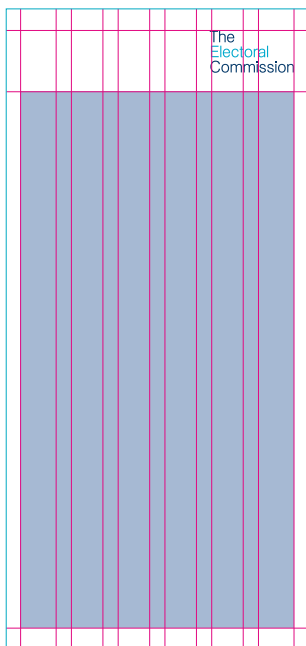
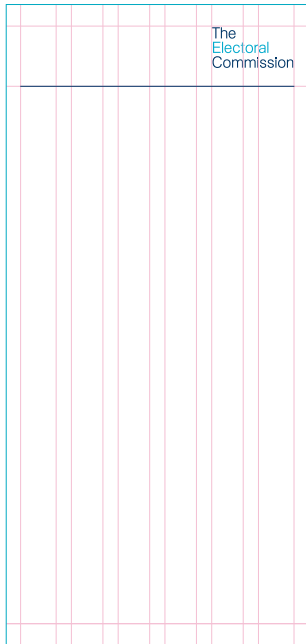
Begin by establishing the margins for the document, making careful reference to the example illustrated below. Divide the remaining text area into six columns with a consistent gutter width of 5mm.

The grid below is established for an A4 portrait format. When creating documents outside this

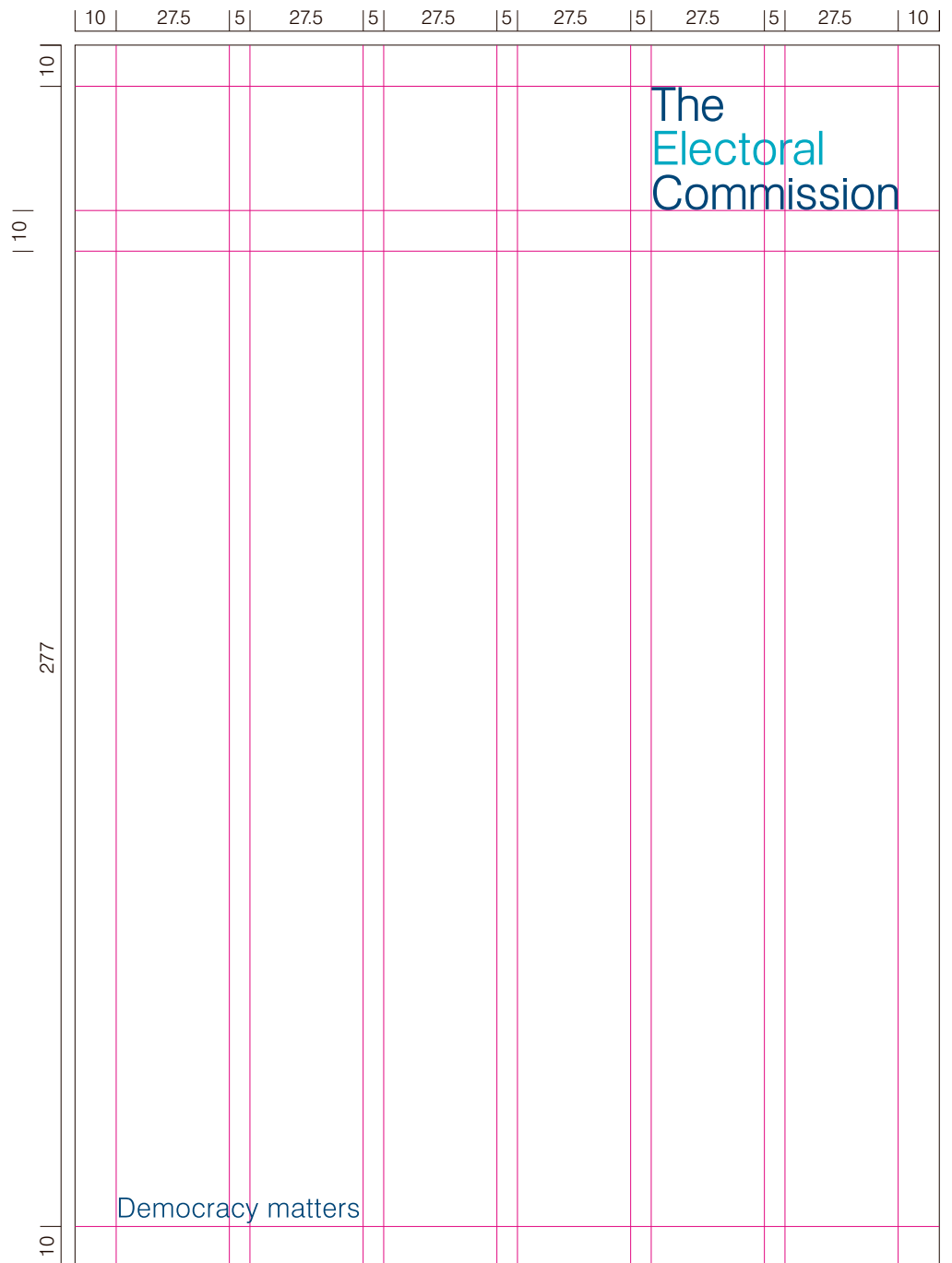
format adjust the margins accordingly but retain the six column 5mm gutter, within reason.

On literature covers, posters, stationery and other applications, the logo always appears in the top right-hand corner of the page, and the strapline in the bottom left-hand corner of the page, as illustrated.

All dimensions are in millimetres. The examples are not shown at actual size.



DL examples



Logo positioning

2.0

Typography and imagery

2.1

Typography

The Electoral

Commission's corporate typeface is Swiss 721 (Bitstream). It is a versatile sans serif typeface that is both functional and distinctive – it is highly legible, economical with space and lends impact to any communication.

Swiss 721 Lt BT

This weight is open and inviting. Use it at large sizes for display headlines, cover titles and page headings. It is also used at 12pt size for body text.

Swiss 721 BT

Swiss 721 BT should be used when you require a **bold appearance**.

Swiss 721 Md BT

Swiss 721 Md BT should be used to create an additional level of bold for items requiring further emphasis than Swiss 721 BT; for example in headings, where more design flexibility is required.

The Swiss 721 family is available globally for PC and Macintosh systems. Note that the Commission is not licensed to provide the font family to suppliers.

See below for examples of type style as it relates to Commission reports.

Important: All Commission publications should conform to the Royal National Institute of the Blind's accessibility guidelines, to help ensure that our materials are usable by partially sighted people. This means that no text, except for footnotes, headers and footers, should be smaller than 12pt. (Captions in this document are also smaller than 12pt, but Commission publications do not generally use these.)

Screen-based font

Arial is used for digital communications requirements, including email, webpages and PowerPoint presentations.

Specific and detailed usage is outlined in electronic templates provided by IT.

Chapter head type style is Swiss 721 Lt BT, 52pt

The type style for introduction text is Swiss 721 Lt BT, 16pt. Type is ranged left with ragged line endings. Allow a line space between paragraphs.

The type style for A-heads is Swiss 721 Lt BT, 16pt

The type style for body text is Swiss 721 Lt BT, 12pt. Type is ranged left with ragged line endings. **Bold text should be in Swiss 721 BT.** Allow a line space between paragraphs.

Design style is clear and open combining the use of subtle, sophisticated typography with the Commission's primary, highlight and neutral colour palettes.

B-head goes here

As shown above, the type style for B-heads is Swiss 721 Lt BT,

12pt, with a 0.25pt rule beneath, offset at 1.75 mm.

C-head goes here

As shown above, the type style for C-heads is Swiss 721 BT, 12pt. Unlike the other headings, it should be in dark blue, not light blue.

It is important the heading hierarchy be clear and logical, and presented consistently throughout the document to aid navigation.

Further detail on type styles, including for bulleted text, boxed text, footnotes, etc., can be found in section 3.3 and our document templates.

2.2

Imagery

Imagery is an integral part of the Commission's visual identity. It is used to inform the Commission's varied audiences and reflect the benefits of its work in the community and its environment. The style of imagery used can influence the way we are perceived and distinguish us from others in our field.

Imagery content

The content of photographs should reflect a simple theme inspired by the brand positioning 'Democracy matters': 'Real lives, real people, captured in real situations'. Imagery should reflect intelligent concepts, taken from a unique point of view, angle or perspective.

Imagery style

The style of imagery should support and reflect the Commission's brand attributes. Imagery should represent real situations in a direct and uncomplicated manner.

Environments should be relevant and look contemporary and smart. Use natural lighting wherever possible and try to capture colours that reflect the Commission's colour palettes.

The colour match does not need to be exact or overt; subtle tints and details of colour can give an overall look and feel that enhances the visual personality.

Photos must be a minimum of 300dpi and large enough for A4 format. Examples of our imagery are shown below.



2.3

Iconography

Symbols and icons are an important part of our visual identity. We use them throughout our communications to simplify information or to clarify particular instructions. Icons can also be used to explain a process or to highlight a particular heading or paragraph.

When creating these icons it is important to remember that the audience will need to recognise them instantly.

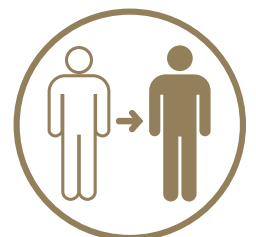
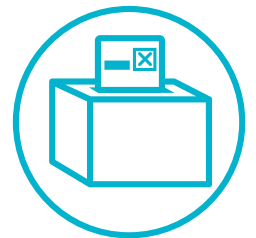
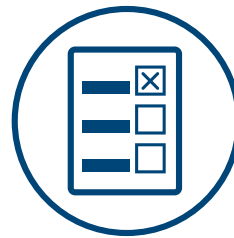
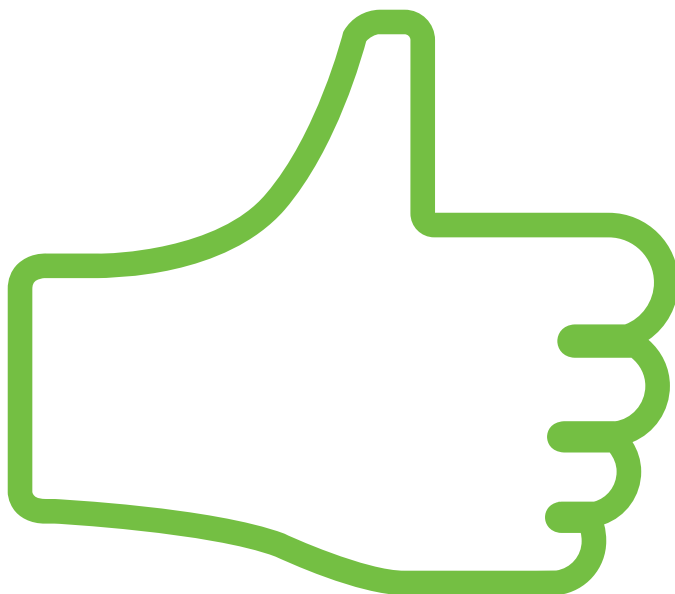
Consideration must be given to people with learning difficulties, people with English as a second language and people with visual impairment.

A maximum of four levels of stroke weight are used in each icon: heavy, medium, light and extra light. As a general rule, icon corners should always appear rounded and the icon's main lines should be the same thickness as the bounding circle.

Icons are created at a minimum size of 10mm, where the medium keyline weight is 1pt. When scaling up smaller icons, attention should be given to the proportionate size of keylines and stroke weights.

Our icons can also be used as an illustration style, for example on a poster or cover design. When icons are used at a large size they do not need to be contained within a circle.

For examples of the icons in use, see section 3.



3.0

Commission
publications

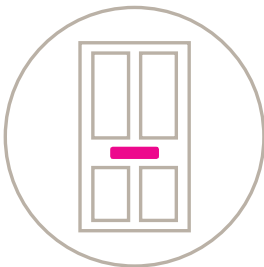
3.1 Public awareness materials Examples of colour and iconography in use

This example shows how our icons and colour palette can be used to display information on our posters. The typeface used is Swiss 721 Lt BT and text should be left aligned as shown here. The use of white space creates clarity and ensures greater emphasis of the colours used in the text and on the icons. The logo should always appear in the top right-hand corner and should be placed

equidistant from the top and right-hand edges (see sections 1.4 and 1.6). The magenta highlight colour is used to link the icons with the titles, emphasising the three instructions: Receive, Reply and Vote.

The
Electoral
Commission

Look out for your right to vote



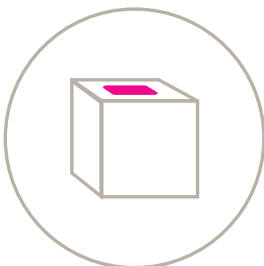
Receive

An electoral registration form will be delivered to your home between August and October.



Reply

Make sure the details are correct and post it back.



Vote

Or you may lose your right to vote.

The examples below show how our icons and colour palette can be used effectively across our leaflets.

orange highlight colour is used to complement the corporate colours and to add emphasis to headings throughout the leaflet.

The first example shows icons used as a front cover illustration and within the leaflet to break up the text and explain the registration process. A white area is used to hold the logo on the front cover and to create clarity within the leaflet (see section 1.6 for exact specification). The icon on the front cover is used at a large size so does not need to be enclosed within a circle. The EC

The second example shows the use of icons to indicate progression through a process. Again, an icon is used outside the circle on the front page. The white area on the front cover ensures the message is clear and compelling. The icons used throughout are linked with numbers, the circles creating a visual link and simplifying the process.

3.2

Report covers

All report covers are based on the same grid, providing guides for positioning the logo, text and imagery.

Cover formats

Reports carry a single image on the front cover. There are two types of front cover, Glossy report covers and Word report covers. Templates exist for both.

Glossy report covers

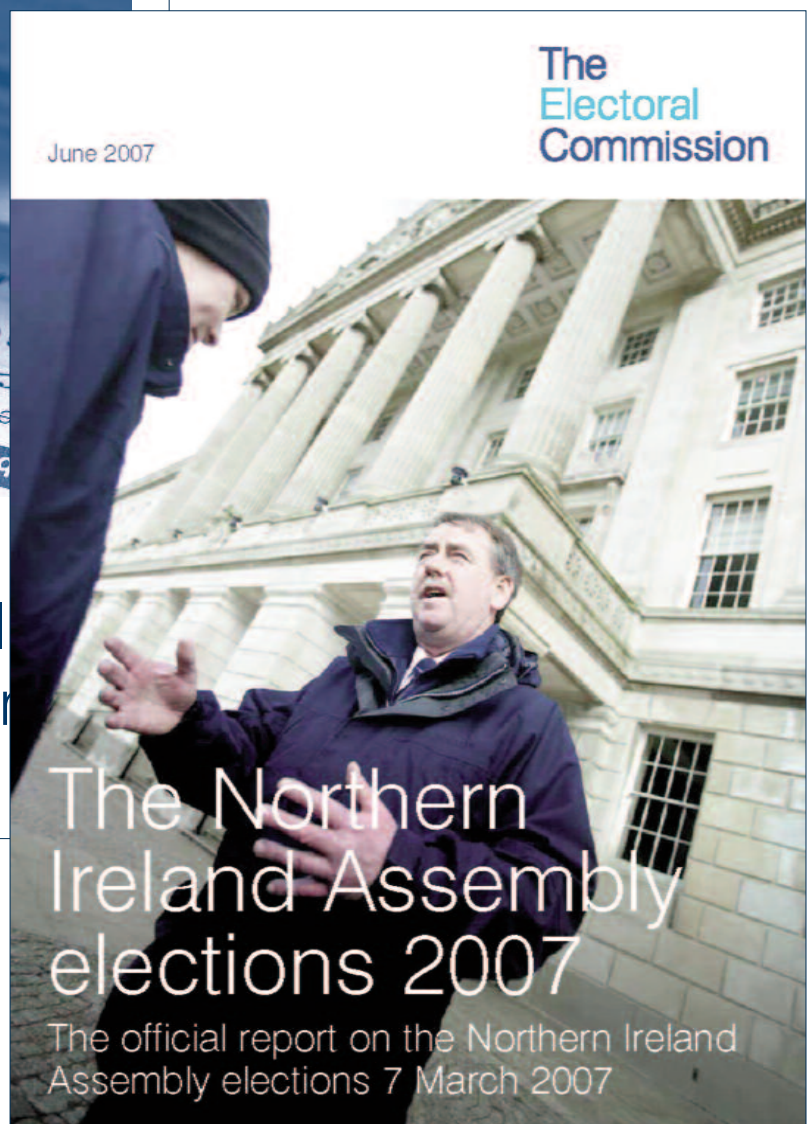
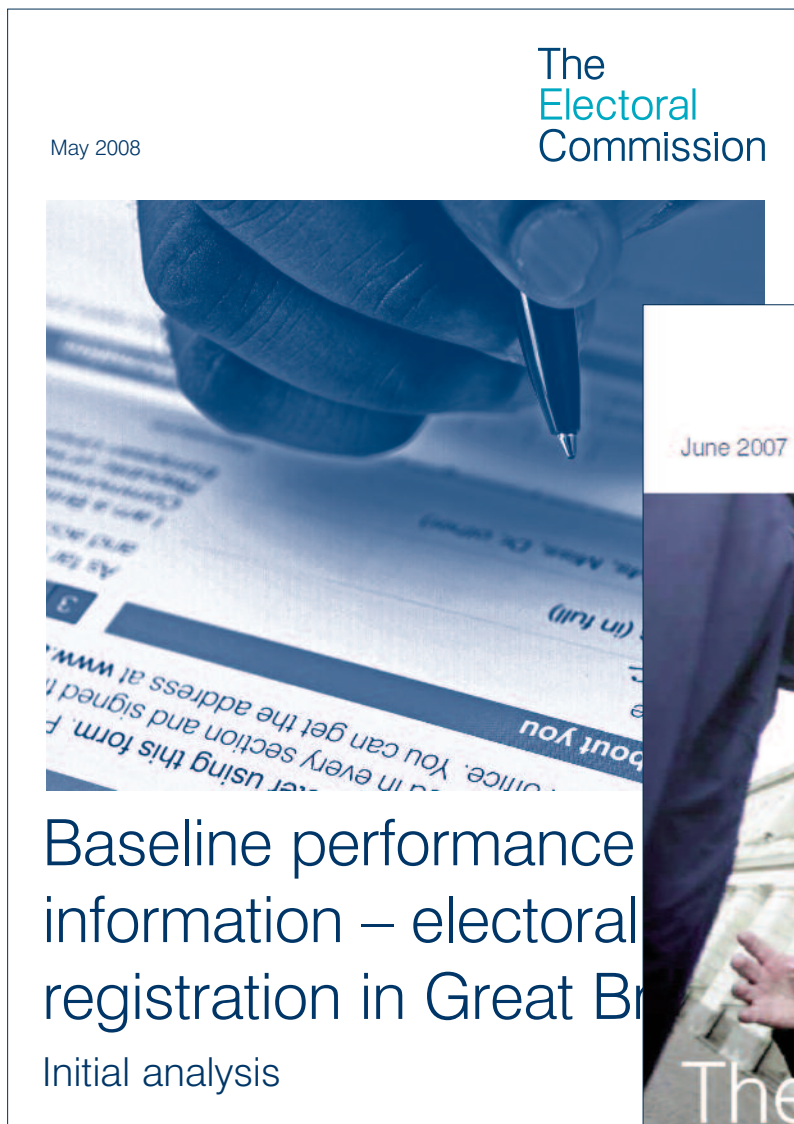
Glossy report covers are used for high-profile publications which are typeset in Quark throughout. Glossy report covers are also typeset in Quark and are printed

full-colour. The image should cover the whole cover except for the white bar at the top.

Word report covers

Word report covers are used for low- to middle-profile publications. They are typeset in Quark and printed in two PANTONE colours (EC light blue and EC dark blue). They carry a single duotone image (white and EC dark blue). This image should be placed in the middle of the cover and should not bleed to the edges.

Note that the name 'Word report cover' refers to the text pages of the report being set in Word, not the software used for the cover itself.



Examples of a Word report cover (above) and a Glossy report cover (right). These are not shown actual size.

3.3

Rules for cover layout

The following guidelines should be followed when laying out a cover, including inside and back covers.

Front covers and spines

Glossy report covers

For Glossy report covers, the text sizes to use are:

- title in 64pt font
- subtitle in 29pt font
- date of publication in 18pt font

All text should be in either white or EC dark blue. If the cover image allows it, the report title should appear at the foot of the page, rather than at the top.

Word report covers

For Word report covers, the text sizes to use are:

- title in 48pt font
- subtitle in 30pt font
- date of publication in 16pt font

All text should be in EC dark blue.

Rules that apply to both Glossy and Word report covers

For both types of cover, the Commission logo should be placed in the top right, at a consistent size (60%, 30mm high for A4 reports).

Reports of more than 80pp will need to be perfect bound and require a spine. This must give the full title of the report (main title and subtitle) in 10pt font size and in white on a field of EC dark blue.

Inside and back covers

The inside and back covers should be presented in the same way on both Glossy and Word report covers.

The inside cover must carry all the following information in EC dark blue in the bottom left:

- Translations and other formats...text and contact details (16pt)
- copyright information

The inside back cover must carry contact details of all our offices in EC dark blue in the bottom right.

The back cover should be a field of EC dark blue and carry the following information in white in the bottom left:

- We are an independent body...text
- Democracy matters
- address and contact details of our Head Office and text directing the reader to the inside back cover for contact details of our other offices.

Note that back covers should no longer carry our logo.

Examples of inside and back covers are shown on the following page.

Examples of (from left to right) a back cover, inside cover and inside back cover. These are not shown actual size.

How to contact us

The Electoral Commission
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW
Tel: 020 7271 0500
Fax: 020 7271 0505
Textphone: 18001 020 7271 0500
info@electoralcommission.org.uk
www.electoralcommission.org.uk

The Electoral Commission
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We are an independent body set up by the UK Parliament. Our aim is integrity and public confidence in the democratic process. We regulate party and election finance and set standards for well-run elections.

Democracy matters

3.4

Structuring reports

All reports follow a standard structure, which determines the ordering and format of the different sections.

Contents page

Chapter heads are displayed and numbered in the Commission's light blue; A-heads are displayed in dark blue. No levels of heading below A-heads are displayed. Information is given in two-column format. Ensure that A-heads are not orphaned from the chapter heads between columns.

Where text carries over onto a second line (or more), align the number on the bottom line. Appendix titles are given in full as A-heads.

List of tables and figures, acknowledgements, preface and summary

These sections of a publication are not numbered chapters. They come between the contents page and the first chapter and must start on a recto (right-hand page). All reports have a summary (formerly executive summary), but the other sections are optional. If the report has a preface, use an image of the person who wrote the preface for the opposite page.

The preface and summary must start with a pullout paragraph, to appear in 16pt font size and in the Commission's light blue. This paragraph should fit into the first column of the first page. No body text should be placed below it. It should not flow into the second column. If footnotes are cited in the pullout paragraph, they can appear at the foot of the column.

Chapters

New chapters must start on a recto. Chapters must be numbered sequentially (1, 2, 3,

etc.) and this should be reflected in the contents page.

Chapters must begin with a pullout paragraph – this should follow the same rules as with the pullouts for the preface and summary.

Paragraphs within chapters should be numbered (see Numbering below).

Verso pages

New chapters must not begin on a verso (left-hand page). Where the verso preceding a new chapter is blank, a full-page image in a dark blue duotone must be inserted.

Appendices

The initial appendix must start on a recto, but subsequent appendices can start on versos.

Appendix A, B, C, etc. must appear as the main (chapter) heading, in 52pt font size and in the Commission's light blue. If there is a subtitle, this must appear below the chapter heading in 31pt font size, also in light blue. Headings should then follow the usual style (A-head, B-head, C-head).

There is no need for a pullout paragraph. Paragraphs are not numbered in appendices.

Footers take the following form – title of report: appendix letter. If there is a subtitle, this is not included in the footer. For example:

Compulsory voting around the world: appendix A

Samples of the contents page, summary and chapter first page styles are shown on the following pages.

Contents

No headings within the summary are listed

Preface	3	Electoral identification	25
Summary	5	Polling agents	26
1 The elections in context	9	The voter experience	27
Remit of the Electoral Commission	9	Integrity of the voting process –	
Elections in the UK	10	perceptions of electoral fraud	28
Scope of the report	10	Policing	28
Sources used to inform the report	10	4 The count	29
2 Preparing for polling day	13	Number of votes cast	29
The announcement of the elections	13	Results	29
Elections steering group	13	Media access	30
New legislation	14	Proposed move to electronic counting	30
Legal challenges	14	Appendices	
The relevant register	15	Appendix A – Electoral administration	
Support to candidates, agents and		in Northern Ireland	31
political parties	15	Appendix B – Election funding	32
Training for poll staff	16	Appendix C – Statistics	33
New political parties	16		
Nominations	17		
Freepost	19		
Party election broadcasts	19		
Postal voting	20		
Campaign issues	22		
Voter information	22		
3 Polling day	23		
Polling stations	23		
Observers	23		
Polling staff	24		
Complaints received	24		
Access	24		
Information on estimated turnout			
during polling day	24		

Each appendix is listed at the same level as A-head within chapters. No headings within appendices are listed.

Contents pages do not have footers

Summary

Elections in Northern Ireland have undergone a considerable transformation in the last few years. Electoral administration was fundamentally changed by the introduction of the Electoral Fraud Act in 2002, which introduced individual registration and requirements for photographic identification at polling stations. These changes have formed the bedrock for increased confidence in the electoral system, which is seen in a more accurate and robust electoral register and elections largely free from allegations of fraud. This in turn has enabled the Chief Electoral Officer to focus on further improving the quality of electoral administration.

Paragraphs in summaries and prefaces are not numbered

Background

As in 2003, planning for the 2007 Northern Ireland Assembly elections took place against the backdrop of some uncertainty in the political process. Improvements in electoral administration are reflected in the voters' experience where nine in 10 (90%) of those interviewed in our post-election public opinion survey said they were either very or fairly satisfied with their overall experience of the elections. These positive views were endorsed by the political parties, candidates, representatives of civic society and the media, none of whom raised any significant issues of concern with the Commission.

Electoral Administration Act 2006

Future elections in Northern Ireland will benefit from the introduction of the Electoral Administration Act 2006, which was not introduced in Northern Ireland in time for the March elections. The Northern Ireland Office plans to commence the provisions of the Act for UK Parliamentary general elections before the Parliamentary recess in summer 2007, after which the provisions will be applied to Northern Ireland Assembly and local government elections. The provisions include allowing people to register to vote up to 11 days before polling day and will introduce changes to political party descriptions. The May 2007 elections in England, Scotland and Wales have provided important learning points on the application of the Act in Northern Ireland.

3 Compulsory voting systems

This chapter looks in more detail at how compulsory voting systems operate in a selection of countries around the world. It reviews the sanctions used by different countries and the provisions, if any, for 'positive abstention'.

Overview

3.1 As we have already seen, a number of countries around the world operate compulsory voting systems but there is considerable variation among these in terms of the level of enforcement applied. International IDEA reports, 'Some laws are created to merely state the government's position regarding what the citizen's responsibility should be. Mandatory voting laws that do not include sanctions may fall into this category... not all laws are created to be enforced.' Consequently, to truly understand the extent to which compulsory voting is actually practised, it is important to consider the level of enforcement.²⁵ In this chapter we look at the nature of the systems, and their sanctions, on a country-by-country basis.

3.2 Sanctions range from penalty fines in Australia, Cyprus and Chile, to prohibition from making banking or other public administrative transactions for three months, allied to financial penalties, in Peru. In Singapore, non-voters risk removal from the electoral register. In Brazil, they might be barred from taking professional examinations, receiving wages, or renewing enrolment in official schools or universities (inspected by government), while in Cyprus they could potentially serve jail sentences.

²⁵ M. Gratschew, *Voter turnout in Western Europe: Compulsory voting in Western Europe* (International IDEA, 2004).

3.5

Text elements

Numbering, footnotes, headers and footers, etc. all follow a consistent format.

Numbering

Chapters are numbered 1, 2, 3, etc. and appendices are labelled A, B, C, etc.

The preface and summary do not take any numbering, either chapter or paragraph. Pullout paragraphs do not take a paragraph number. Appendices do not take any paragraph numbering.

The first plain-text paragraph of a new chapter must be the first numbered paragraph. Paragraph numbering is consecutive and takes the form of 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, etc. Paragraph numbering follows chapter numbering – if the paragraphs are in the second chapter, for example, they will be numbered: 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, etc. Paragraph numbers must not go down to a further level (i.e. 2.1.1).

Paragraph numbers should be in the Commission's dark blue and bold, and followed by a single space.

Headings do not take numbers – the numbers should be attached to the paragraphs themselves. Boxed text does not take a paragraph number.

Bulleted lists

Bulleted lists must be left aligned with no indent. There must be a space in between each item.

Footnotes

Footnotes can be used for both references and general notes on the text. They are cited in the text by consecutive superscript numbers. The note must appear at the foot of the column in which it has been cited (even if the citation is in a pullout paragraph) underneath a key-line and must be marked with the relevant superscript number. These must end with a full stop.

Headers and footers

The only headers used in standard Commission reports are page numbers. These must be placed in the top outside corner of a page (top left on versos; top right on rectos) and must be dark blue and in 52pt font size. Pages consisting of full-page images should not show a page number, although they do count as part of the numbering. Blank pages at the end of a report (making up a workable (x4) page extent) should not have page numbers.

Footers take the following form – title of report: chapter title. If there is a subtitle, this is not included in the footer. For example:

Compulsory voting around the world: background

Please note the use of capitals – lower case letters follow the colon (unless it is a proper noun). Footers should be placed in the bottom outside corner of a page (bottom left on versos; bottom right on rectos).

Boxed text

Boxed text is used for stand-alone points, short summaries or recommendations. There are two types – the light blue shaded box is used for current recommendations and a light blue outlined box is used for past or future recommendations. Paragraph numbers are not used and text within the boxes remains in dark blue, 12pt size.

References

For most reports, references will be relatively few and will be placed in footnotes. Occasionally, however, references will be cited in the text – e.g. (Williamson, 2006) – and given in full in a separate references section before the appendices.

3.6

Tables and figures

Tables and figures follow a consistent, straightforward format.

Tables and figures must be presented as shown in the examples below. Where they require titles, these must be given as Table 1, 2, 3, etc. and Figure 1, 2, 3, etc. and must be separated from the heading by a colon.

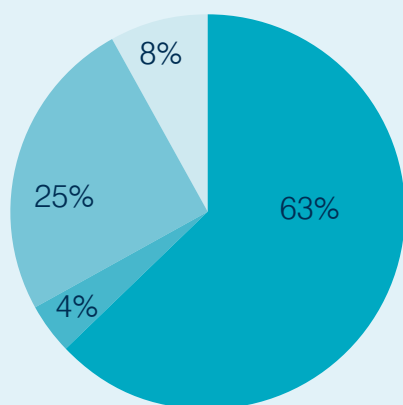
For example:

Table 1: Summary of compulsory voting systems and their sanctions

Tables and figures in appendices must be labelled Table/Figure A1, A2, A3, etc. within Appendix A, Table/Figure B1, B2, B3, etc. within Appendix B, and so on.

Base, note or source material (to appear in this order) must be in 12pt font size and appear below the table or figure. 'Total' lines should be presented in bold type. Where figures are given to one or more decimal place, they should be aligned on the decimal point.

Figure 1: What evidence can the Commission use to understand community identity?



- The use of public facilities in identifying community identity is advocated, but it cannot be considered in isolation.
- Clearer guidance on what public facilities can be used and some indication of a hierarchy or weighting would be welcomed.
- Public facilities are not a good indicator of community identity – factors such as the opinions of local people, historic factors and transport links are more important.
- Other comments/opinions.

Table 4: Cost of administering the 2001 local government elections in Northern Ireland

Expenditure type	Cost (£)	Total (%)
Postage ('freepost')	810,479	54
Staff costs	364,085	24
Printing and stationery	303,806	20
Postal votes	33,913	2
Other costs	2,157	<1
Total	1,514,442	100

Source: EONI.

Table 1: Focus group structure

Gender	Age	Socio-economic group	Religion	Voter/ non-voter	Location	Constituency
Male	25–44	ABC1*	Catholic	Voter	Urban	Belfast North
Female	18–24	C2DE**	Protestant	Non-voter †	Rural	Belfast North
Female	45+	C2DE	Protestant	Voter	Rural	West Tyrone
Male	25–44	ABC1	Catholic	Voter	Rural	West Tyrone
Female	45+	C2DE	Catholic	Voter	Rural	East Londonderry

Notes: * ABC1 = managers, administrators, professionals and clerical workers.

** C2DE = skilled and unskilled manual workers, those on long-term benefit and the retired drawing a state pension.

† Group included two to three non-registered participants.

3.7

Print specifications

This section contains details of print specifications used in our publications. Small print runs may be printed digitally.

Reports

Four page cover

Printed in full colour on outer and inner covers. Printed on recycled silk 250gsm. Either spiral bound in-house, professionally saddle stitched or perfect bound, depending on extent of print run.

Text pages

Printed black text only on 80gsm uncoated recycled stock.

Findings and summaries

Printed (litho or digital) on recycled silk 125gsm, in two Pantone colours (EC dark blue and EC light blue).

Manuals

Binders

Large ring-binders with four-colour cover insert and two Pantone colour (EC dark blue and EC light blue) back cover insert.

Text pages and dividers

Loose-leaf 80gsm pages, printed black text only. Polypropylene dividers, designed and printed in a single spot colour.

4.0

Contact details

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