

Language *style*

# House style

## 1) Always try to be clear, real and friendly.

Clear: use words that are easy to understand.

Real: be straightforward and inclusive – we're much more than just 'the council'. We're Haringey!

Friendly: write with warmth and respect.

Do	Don't
Be straightforward, precise and accurate.	Exaggerate, embellish, bluff or over-promise.
Be succinct. Try to express one idea per sentence.	Write in long sentences, or use 10 words when two will do.
Use language that is appropriate and easy to understand.	Use slang or colloquialisms. Use overly complicated, technical or unusual words.
Lead with the most important message.	Bury key information down the page or screen.
Create energy with short sentences.	Be staid, stuffy or formal.
Use the active voice: 'We can do this...' This is direct, demonstrates commitment and empowers ownership of the action.	Use the passive voice: 'This can be done...' This is indirect and doesn't invite ownership.
Be inclusive: address people as 'you', and talk about ourselves as 'us' and 'we'.	Create distance by using the overly formal 'Haringey will...', 'Applicants must...'
Write as though you're talking to a good friend.	Write in a way that's superior, condescending or distant.
Be confident and convey information in a positive and reassuring way.	Be unnecessarily apologetic, pessimistic or technical.

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## 2) Always try to be consistent in the way we write.

<b>Numbers</b>	<p>We write zero to nine as words, and switch to numerals from 10 onwards. For example 'nine out of 10 applications'. There are a few exceptions to this:</p> <p>Units of measurement, such as £5, 2cm, 9pm, page 6</p> <p>Numbers joined by a dash meaning 'to', such as 5–14, 6–12 years</p> <p>Numbers in a table or figure</p> <p>Numbers that start a sentence. For example, 'Nineteen people attended...'</p> <p>We write out ordinal numbers 1–9 and switch to numerals from 10 onwards. For example 'first', 23rd.</p>
<b>Times</b>	<p>We use the 12-hour clock and use 'am' and 'pm', not 'o'clock'.</p> <p>We use full stops and leave out spaces and unnecessary zeros:</p> <p>7am (not 7.00am, 0700, or seven o'clock)</p> <p>7.30pm (not 7:30pm, 1930, or half-past seven).</p>
<b>Dates</b>	<p>Where possible, use actual dates rather than ambiguous phrases such as 'in summer', 'next year'. We write dates as:</p> <p>Tuesday 21 December 2015</p> <p>21 December 2015</p> <p>21/12/15 (date/month/year)</p> <p>21st century</p> <p>2011–2, 2008–15 (to show periods of time)</p> <p>2014/15 (to show a financial year)</p>

<b>Money</b>	<p>We use symbols to denote currency. We leave out full stops, spaces and unnecessary zeros:</p> <p>£ and p not pounds and pence</p> <p>£3.5 million (not £3,500,000 or £3.5m)</p> <p>£3 (not £3.00), £3.50</p> <p>99p (not £0.99)</p> <p>£1,000</p> <p>\$. €, etc (not USD, dollars, euro, etc)</p>
<b>Titles</b>	<p>We italicise the titles of publications, films, books, television shows and radio programmes.</p>
<b>Abbreviations</b>	<p>We don't use full stops in common abbreviations. For example:</p> <p>Mrs, Mr, Dr</p> <p>eg, etc, ie</p> <p>PhD, BA, MSc</p> <p>We try not to use ampersands (&amp;) – instead, we write out the word 'and', unless it is impractical to do so.</p>