

# **Citizens Information Board Standards and Guidelines**

**House Style Guide**

**July 2015**



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## Preface

This style guide was originally developed as a resource for the Citizens Information Board's website team.

It is also a useful tool for the production of any written material, whether for online or print publication.

The guide was developed in 2006 and has since been revised, following feedback from users. It is regularly updated, and comments and suggestions are most welcome.

You may reproduce material from this guide provided that you acknowledge the source.

### Note:

We use italic in this style guide:

- *To indicate a cross-reference to another section of the guide*
- *To distinguish words under discussion from the rest of the text*
- *To identify the titles of publications*

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## Chapter 1: Writing clearly

### Active and passive verbs

Use the active voice rather than the passive voice for most writing; it is clearer and more direct. For example:

Use: You can appeal your Leaving Certificate results.

Avoid: Leaving Certificate results can be appealed.

Use the passive voice when you do not know the agent of the action or do not wish to name the agent. For example:

Your re-entry visa is returned to you by registered post.

### 1.1 Strong verbs

Strong verbs describe actions directly. Use them where possible; they are more straightforward and easier to understand. For example:

Use: to investigate the incident

Avoid: to conduct an investigation into the incident

### 1.2 Avoiding wordiness

Do not use words and phrases that add nothing to the meaning of the text or are unnecessarily long-winded.

Use: Planning applications for major development projects can be long and complex, so assessing them may take some time.

Avoid: Due to the fact that planning applications for development projects which are major in scope can be of significant length and complexity, it should be pointed out that that the process of assessing them may in certain cases take a considerable length of time.

Some typical examples of wordy or redundant phrases, with suggested alternatives, are:

in the event that (if)

in view of the fact that (because)

at this point in time (now, or omit the phrase)

on a monthly basis (monthly)

### 1.3 Foreign words and phrases

Do not use a foreign word or phrase unless it is necessary for the reader's understanding. For example, use *instead of* or *in place of*, not *in lieu of*.

Sometimes, it is necessary to use a foreign term in relation to the law. For example: *force majeure*. Keep this to a minimum and explain the foreign term when you use it. Set such terms in italic the first time you use them.

Do not use accents with foreign words that have entered mainstream English. Do not italicise these terms. For example: *creche* and *cafe*.

### 1.4 Modifier stacks

Do not place a string of three or more modifiers before a noun. These modifying words such as adjectives are intended to describe that noun but can result in confusion. For example:

Use: the new application form for planning permission to build a house extension

Avoid: the new house extension planning permission application form

### 1.5 *Present tense*

Use the present tense for current information. For example: Under the National Minimum Wage Act 2000 most employees *are entitled* to a minimum wage.

Use the future tense for legislation that has still to be enacted. For example: The new EU Directive *will aim* to ensure that...

Use the present tense to give instructions and describe processes. For example: When you leave your job your employer *must give* you a P45.

Use other tenses only when the meaning of the text requires them. For example: The President *signed* the Bill in May 2014.

### 1.6 *Sentences and paragraphs*

Use short sentences and straightforward sentence constructions. Avoid long complicated sentences; they are difficult to write and difficult to read. Keep to one or two ideas in a sentence. The Plain English Campaign suggests an average sentence length of 15 to 20 words.

Divide your information into short topics and cover each topic in one paragraph. Start each paragraph with the topic sentence – that is, put the most important information first. For example:

The main payment available to one-parent families is the One-Parent Family Payment (OFP). A number of changes have been made to the OFP in recent years. These changes have dealt, in particular, with the means test and the upper age limit for a child in respect of whom a payment may be claimed.

The Jobseeker's Allowance Transition (JST) payment was introduced as a temporary measure to provide for parents who lose the OFP because of the changes to the upper age limit for children. The maximum weekly amounts of OFP and JST are the same – currently €188 a week and the same amount is payable in respect of each dependent child – currently €29.80 a week. The conditions attached are different in many respects.

In online documents, aim for paragraphs of three to five sentences and no more than 45-50 words. If the topic is covered in one or two sentences, move on to a new paragraph. For example:

Most Senior Cycle students choose the established Leaving Certificate programme. This 2-year programme covers a wide range of subjects.

Subjects are normally studied at either Ordinary or Higher Level. Two subjects, Irish and Mathematics, can be studied at Foundation Level. Foundation Level is geared to the needs of students who might have difficulty with those subjects at Ordinary or Higher Level.

Students normally study 6 or 7 subjects during the Senior Cycle. If they are following the established Leaving Certificate programme they must take at least 5 subjects, including Irish.

### 1.7 *Vocabulary*

Use words which are familiar, short and concrete. Do not use words which are fancy, long or abstract.

Do not use jargon (in the sense of technical language) unless it is necessary to do so or would be useful for the reader. In such cases, explain the jargon in straightforward terms. For example:

Use: If the person or institution detaining you cannot justify the detention or prove that it is lawful, the High Court may order that you be released. This is called a *habeas corpus* order.

Avoid: If the person or institution detaining you cannot justify the detention or prove that it is lawful, the High Court may issue a habeas corpus order.

Set these technical terms in italic the first time you use them.

Avoid, for example, expressions such as:

shall be deemed

ring fenced

if you are in receipt of

ballpark figure

## 1.8 Spelling

Check that your spelling checker is set to English (Ireland) or English (UK) and not to English (US). Do not depend only on your spelling checker to catch mistakes and consult a dictionary when in doubt. Always review your work to make sure it reads sensibly

Take care with homonyms (words which sound the same but are spelled differently) such as *licence* and *license*, *dependant* and *dependent*. For example:

Children are dependants of their parents. Extra allowances may be payable if you have a dependent child.

## 1.9 Inclusive language

You need to take account of diversity when you are writing and always consider a reader's culture, religion, racial or ethnic background, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability.

## 1.10 Avoid grouping

Avoid limiting and depersonalising people by placing them in groups such as *the elderly* or *the disabled*. In many cases, this means do not make nouns out of adjectives. For example: use *unemployed people*, not *the unemployed*.

### Address the reader

Address the reader directly rather than using the third person. This is more inclusive and is often easier to write because it avoids clunky text. For example:

People with disabilities are eligible for home help services and other home support services.

can be rewritten as:

If you have a disability, you are eligible for home help services and other home support services.

If you need to address a number of different readers, make it clear which readers you are addressing. For example: If you are separated, you may...

### Use acceptable terms

The meanings or associations of some words change over time. What was once acceptable can become derogatory. Check *Appendix 1* for the appropriate words or

phrases to use when discussing a particular issue. If necessary, seek the advice of a representative group.

### **People from ethnic groups or other countries**

Always use the official terms when referring to the nationality, language or cultural background of people from other countries or ethnic groups. For example: use *Roma*, not *gypsy*.

Avoid grouping people as *Asians* or *Africans*. Name the individual countries involved.

In general, do not use exclusionary terms with negative prefixes. Avoid *non-national*; use *foreign national*. *Non-denominational* is an exception.

### **People with disabilities**

Take care not to make assumptions about a disability. Choose words that are impartial and accurate. For example: use *a person who has had a stroke*, not *a stroke victim*.

Focus on abilities, not limitations. For example: use *wheelchair user*, not *confined to a wheelchair* or *wheelchair-bound*.

Avoid terms which suggest management of people or appear to view people as problems. For example: use *family support needs*, not *family burden*.

### **Gender-neutral terms**

Use gender-neutral language where possible for occupations and titles. For example: use *firefighter*, not *fireman*.

If you are talking generally, prefer terms such as *chairperson* or *chair* to *chairman*. If you are using the term as a title before a named person, check the term used by the organisation in question and be specific.

Note: use *ombudsman*, not *ombudsperson* or *ombudswoman*, the plural is *ombudsmen*.

There may not always be a suitable gender-neutral term for a general situation. For example: *landlord* is generally recognised as applying to either a man or woman.

### **He/she, his/her, they**

Where possible, address the reader directly. If this seems inappropriate, use *he*, *she* or *they* as required in the context. For example: If a pregnant woman needs medical treatment, she must...

Use *they* or *their* if the sentence could apply to both a man and a woman. For example: When your child reaches 16, *they* may be entitled to Disability Allowance.

Rewrite in the plural to avoid this construction if possible.

### **Sexual orientation**

Use individual terms as appropriate to specify the gender of a person. For example: use *gay men* or *lesbians*, not *homosexuals*.

If you refer to a same-sex couple, refer in turn to a heterosexual couple and not a mixed couple or an ordinary couple.

## **1.11 Using Irish**

Use Irish for terms that are generally referred to by their Irish name. For example: use *the Taoiseach*, not *the Prime Minister*.

Readers, whether international or domestic, may not always be familiar with Irish terms. Explain the term the first time you use it. For example: *gaelscoileanna* (schools where subjects are taught through Irish).

In an online document, insert a link where possible to a topic that explains the term in more depth. For example: [Bunreacht na hÉireann \(the Irish Constitution\)](#).

When referring to organisations with Irish names, do not give the literal translation if this does not explain the function of the organisation. For example:

Teagasc is the National Agriculture and Food Development Authority, not instruction or teaching.

If an organisation is referred to by both its English and Irish name, use whichever is better known with the alternative in brackets on first use. For example: the Child and Family Agency (Tusla).

### ***The or An***

Use *An* if it is part of the official name of an organisation. For example: *An Garda Síochána* (the Irish police force).

Use *the* before other Irish terms which occur in everyday language. For example: use *the Taoiseach*, not *An Taoiseach*.

## ***1.12 Abbreviations and acronyms***

Abbreviations, acronyms and contractions are the three most commonly used terms for shortened forms of words or phrases. All three forms are often simply referred to as abbreviations.

See *Appendix 2* for the preferred form of abbreviations when writing public service information.

Abbreviations omit the end of a word or omit parts of a word, or use the initial letters in a series of words. For example: *ISPCA* for *Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*.

Acronyms are abbreviations which can be pronounced as words. They are formed using the first letters of a word or phrase, or the first syllables of a word or phrase. For example: *VAT* for *Value Added Tax*.

### **Uses**

Use the abbreviation or acronym alone if the term is generally referred to in that way and is rarely used in its full form, such as *TD*, *AIDS* and *DART*.

Some terms are commonly referred to by both their full name and their abbreviation. For example: *National Roads Authority (NRA)*. Always give both the full form and the abbreviation in these cases, even if you subsequently do not use the abbreviated form.

Otherwise, use abbreviations and acronyms sparingly. Use them if the term is lengthy or awkward to read and is repeated so often that it is easier to read in the shortened form.

In a long section, repeat the full form occasionally unless you are using a familiar abbreviation. If you are using two or more similar abbreviations, repeat the full form to avoid ambiguity.

### **First time you use an abbreviation**

Use the full name and the abbreviation the first time you use it and the first time it occurs in each successive section. For example: *Back to Education Allowance (BTEA)*.

Follow a familiar abbreviation with the expanded form in brackets as readers may only be aware of one form. For example: *EU (European Union)*.

If possible, vary the abbreviation with a recognisable component of the full phrase. For example: Vary the use of *ECJ* with *the Court* for the European Court of Justice.

### **Abbreviations to avoid**

Avoid using abbreviated words unless space is a problem, such as in a table. For example, in normal text, use *street* not *st.* and *number*, not *no.*

Do not use Latin abbreviations such as *viz.*, *e.g.* or *i.e.* Readers may not be familiar with them. In normal text, the only exceptions to this rule are *am* and *pm*.

### **Capitals in abbreviations and acronyms**

In general, use upper case (capitals) for acronyms and abbreviations formed from initial letters of words. For example: MABS, PAYE.

If the abbreviation represents the name of an organisation, follow the form that the organisation itself uses in text in its website or literature. For example: *AHEAD*, not *Ahead*.

### **Full stops in abbreviations and acronyms**

Do not insert full stops in abbreviations and acronyms formed from initial letters. For example: use *TD*, not *T.D.*

Do not insert full stops in abbreviations that end with the last letter of the word. For example: *Mr* (not *Mr.*).

Use full stops for single initials and abbreviations that do not end with the last letter. For example, *Ph.D.* and *Co.*

Use full stops after initials in a person's name. Insert one space after each full stop. For example: *J. J. Kavanagh*, not *JJ Kavanagh* or *J.J. Kavanagh*.

### **Plural abbreviations and acronyms**

To form the plural, add a lower case *s*, but no apostrophe. For example: *Many CISs* not *Many CIS's* – see *Appendix 3*.

### **Possessive form of abbreviations and acronyms**

Follow the usual rules when forming the possessive case of an abbreviation or acronym. If possible, however, rewrite the sentence to avoid awkward phrases. For example: *guidelines from MABS* rather than *MABS's guidelines*.

### **A, an and the with abbreviations and acronyms**

Pronunciation, not spelling, is the guideline for deciding whether you should put a or *an* before an abbreviation. Use *an* before abbreviations beginning with a vowel sound. Otherwise, use *a*. For example: *an MEP*, not *a MEP* and *a TD*.

Acronyms do not usually need the definite article, *the*, before them. For example: *NAMA* not *the NAMA* but *the DART*, not *DART*.

## **1.13 Contractions**

Contractions omit letters from the start, middle or end of words.

### **Verbal contractions**

These are made up of two words including a verb. They use the apostrophe to indicate missing letters. For example: *it's* for *it is*, *couldn't* for *could not*.

Do not use this type of contraction unless the nature of the publication requires a familiar conversational tone. For example: the leaflet *Information for School Leavers*. If you must use these contractions, be careful with the negative form. For example: *haven't*, not *have'nt* and *don't*, not *do'nt* or *do'n't*.

### **Noun contractions**

A noun contraction is a shortened version of a word. In plain English, a well-established noun contraction is used instead of the lengthier version of the word. These contractions no longer use an apostrophe to indicate missing letters. For example: *flu* for *influenza*, *phone* for *telephone*.

## Chapter 2: Formatting

Formatting is the arrangement of the text on the page or screen. In online publications, a number of these elements are preset. In printed publications, the final decisions about a number of formatting elements are made in consultation with the designer.

### 2.1 Headings and captions

Start with a capital letter. Otherwise, only use capital letters if the word or phrase would normally take capital letters.

As a general rule, set headings in bold type. Do not insert any punctuation at the end of a heading.

Place captions beneath photographs. Do not set captions in bold. Use a full stop at the end of the caption only if it is a sentence.

#### Heading levels

Heading levels are preset online. In print, restrict your writing to three levels: chapter heading, section heading and paragraph heading. In general, use numbered headings only for chapter headings unless you are writing a complex document such as a social policy report.

#### Embedded headings

Use embedded headings at the start of consecutive paragraphs or items within a list to present complex or contrasting information. Set these headings in bold. For example:

These documents include:

- **Passport** – this must be valid for at least the duration of your proposed stay
- **Visa** – if you are a citizen of a visa-required country

### 2.2 Footnotes

Use these sparingly for a lengthy aside or reference. If possible, use brackets as an alternative. Insert a footnote at the end of a page rather than putting an endnote at the end of the section.

Do not use footnotes online except directly under a table. Use a link instead.

### 2.3 Indexes

Use lower case unless the term is normally capitalised. Use first and second-level heading entries only. For example:

separated parents

- Custody
- income tax

In general, index a term if there is a reasonable amount of information on the subject. Do not index cross-references. Insert synonyms or established alternative terms in the index; add the term used in the text in brackets after the index entry. For example: *family emergency (force majeure)*.

## 2.4 *Bold, italic and underlining*

### **Bold**

Reserve bold for headings. Otherwise, use bold formatting only for words or phrases that you wish to emphasise, and use it sparingly.

### **Italic**

Italicise legal or other technical terms which require an explanation. Italicise these terms only when you use them for the first time and always accompany them with an explanation. For example: a claim for *personal injuries* (injuries suffered as a result of an accident or incident) must be commenced within two years.

Use italic for titles of publications. Use normal text with a link for online publications.

Italicise examples of law suits and case law. For example: *O'Reilly v McManus*.

Do not italicise foreign words or phrases such as *cafe*.

Note: this House Style Guide uses italic in running text to distinguish words under discussion from the surrounding text.

### **Underlining**

Do not use underlining in print or online writing. If used online, it could be mistaken for a link.

## Chapter 3: Punctuation

The purpose of punctuation is to make the text clear and readable. Too much punctuation causes distraction, too little can lead to confusion.

### 3.1 Ampersand

Use the ampersand (&) only if it is part of the proper name of an organisation, such as *Age & Opportunity*, or the title of a publication.

Do not use the ampersand to replace the word *and* in normal text.

### 3.2 Apostrophe

Apostrophes mark a contraction in a word or the possessive case. Certain contractions use the apostrophe, such as *it's*.

The possessive case indicates ownership or association, as in *landlord's property*.

#### Singular possessive

For words which are singular, add 's (an apostrophe and the letter s) to the end of the word to create the possessive form. For example: the *court's* decision, the *HSE's* policy.

For singular words ending in s, x and z, the same rule generally applies. For example: St *James's* Hospital, *Marx's* theory.

There are exceptions to this rule and the best advice is to use pronunciation as a guide.

#### Plural form of possessives

For plural words ending in s, add the apostrophe after the s. For example: *solicitors'* fees, six *months'* notice.

Our use of *Citizens Information* is an exception to the above rule – see *Appendix 3*. For example: *Citizens Information Centres*, not *Citizens' Information Centres*.

In normal text, however, do use the apostrophe with *citizens' information*.

For plural words that do not end with s, add an apostrophe and the letter s. For example: *children's* rights, *people's* attitudes.

#### Possessive compound nouns

In compound nouns that are phrases, apply the apostrophe to the last word in the phrase. For example: *father-in-law's* name, *EU Commission's* report.

If the phrase is plural, prefer *of* instead of the apostrophe. For example: *names of the fathers-in-law*, not *fathers-in-law's names*.

#### Its, yours, hers, ours, theirs

Possessive pronouns do not take the apostrophe. For example: *yours*, not *your's*. Take care with *its* and *it's*. *Its* indicates ownership. *It's* is a contraction of *it is*. For example: It's often said that every dog has its day. *It's* is colloquial and should rarely, if ever, appear in public service publications.

#### Apostrophe problems

Do not use apostrophes for plurals if the plurals do not own anything in the sentence. This error usually occurs where the word ends in a vowel in the singular form. For example: *Refugees* have the right to work, not *Refugee's* have the right to work.

In particular, look out for plurals of abbreviations. For example: *JLCs* not *JLC's*.

Do not use the apostrophe with numbers. For example: *1990s*, not *1990's*.

### 3.3 Brackets

Use round brackets to enclose extra information that is not essential to the meaning of the surrounding text. The non-essential information inside the brackets can be a word, numbers, a phrase or a sentence.

Always use brackets:

- *To introduce abbreviations* – Family Income Supplement (*FIS*)
- *To give translations* – Garda Síochána (*Irish police force*)
- *To provide a reference* – Under the Fluoridation of Water Supplies Regulations 2007 (*SI 42/2007*) fluoride is added to the water in all public supplies.

You can also use brackets:

- *To explain jargon* – Groundwater (*water from springs and boreholes*) may have to be treated, depending on the quality of its source.
- *To give a cross-reference in printed publications* – Contact the Health and Safety Authority (*see 'Useful addresses'*)
- *To supply extra details* – tax at the standard rate (*20%*)

You should always be able to justify using brackets, especially if the extra information is quite lengthy. For example:

The Department of Social Protection (which is responsible for the administration of the social security system) examines all your sources of income.

#### **Punctuation with brackets**

Do not place a comma before or after the brackets. For example:

Use: Some advisers deal with a large area (especially outside Dublin) and it may be difficult for you to go the office.

Avoid: Some advisers deal with a large area, (especially outside Dublin), and it may be difficult for you to go the office.

If the enclosed phrase finishes the sentence, put the full stop outside the closing bracket. For example: Return the completed form (and all the supporting documents).

If the enclosed phrase finishes a sentence and it is a sentence itself, treat it as a separate sentence and follow the usual punctuation rules. (Start with a capital letter and end with a full stop.)

#### **Brackets within brackets**

Avoid nesting sets of brackets inside each other as this can be confusing. For example:

The most common situation is where a pensioner (on State Pension (Contributory) or Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's (Contributory) Pension) has an occupational pension as well as their social welfare pension.

Try using alternative punctuation to solve this type of problem, such as a pair of commas or dashes. For example:

The most common situation is where a pensioner – on State Pension (Contributory) or Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's (Contributory) Pension – has an occupational pension as well as their social welfare pension.

### **Alternative punctuation – commas, dashes and brackets**

Try to avoid using too many sets of brackets in your text, particularly for longer phrases. Commas and dashes can sometimes be used instead of brackets. Use commas to integrate a non-essential phrase closely with the rest of the sentence. For example:

All employers, no matter the size of the company, must provide the statutory annual leave entitlement.

Use dashes to separate the phrase from the rest of the sentence and to add emphasis to it. For example:

For import into Ireland, each of the above animals – there are no exceptions – must have an import licence.

Use brackets to clearly separate the phrase from the rest of the sentence in a more formal way. For example:

Every motor vehicle in Ireland (with the exception of vehicles brought in temporarily by visitors) must be registered with Revenue.

### **3.4 Colon**

The colon (:) serves as an introduction to the remainder of the sentence. It is useful in a number of ways.

Use the colon:

- *To introduce a vertical list – see 7. Lists.*
- *To present an example. For example: Assistive technologies have improved significantly: screen readers are now much more effective.*
- *To present a conclusion. For example: Oil stocks are declining: we need to invest in other fuel technologies now.*
- *To provide an explanation. For example: The Act defines the statutory minimum: annual paid leave entitlement of four weeks.*
- *To introduce a quotation or extract. For example: The Ombudsman welcomed the new publication:*

“It should be of great benefit – not just to members of the public but also to public bodies who need public feedback in order to improve the services they provide.”

- *To introduce a series of words or phrases after a complete statement. For example:*

Use: The following clinical interest groups are included: managers, teachers, physiotherapists and neurologists. (The colon follows a complete statement.)

Avoid: The clinical interest groups include: managers, teachers, physiotherapists and neurologists.

### **3.5 Comma**

Commas separate the parts of a sentence to provide structure and clarity. Avoid overusing the comma. If a sentence has a large number of commas, consider breaking it down into short sentences.

#### **Introductory words or phrases**

Use a comma after an introductory word or phrase. For example: At the beginning of March, the Department proposed three new programmes.

### **A series of words or phrases**

Use commas to separate a series of words or phrases. For example: The project will require funding, promotion, tools and expertise.

Do not insert a comma before the final *and* unless the comma is required to avoid ambiguity. For example:

The legislation applies to parents and children, teachers and pupils, carers, and older people.

### **Non-essential phrases**

Use commas to enclose a word or phrase which is not essential to the meaning of the sentence. For example:

The legislation does not apply where a close relative, such as a parent, is the employer.

Do not use commas to enclose a word or phrase that is essential to the meaning of the sentence. For example:

Use: Staff who incur expenses will be reimbursed by the employer.

Avoid: Staff, who incur expenses, will be reimbursed by the employer.

You can also use dashes or brackets to enclose a non-essential phrase.

### **Main clauses joined by a conjunction**

Use a comma to separate main clauses joined by a conjunction such as *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor* and *yet*. For example:

There is no need for the father to apply to the court for guardianship rights, nor is there any need for him to adopt the child.

Do not use the comma where clauses are short and simple. For example:

The property goes to the survivor but there is no tax liability.

Do not use the comma to join two main clauses which are not joined by a conjunction. Instead, create two sentences, or use a semicolon, or insert a conjunction.

### **Words and phrases such as *however*, *for example*, *nevertheless***

Use commas to enclose words and phrases such as *however*, *for example*, *nevertheless*, *in addition*, *that is* and *overall*. For example:

The new position, nevertheless, should not be on terms substantially less favourable than the terms of the previous job.

Do not overuse these words and phrases, since they can make your writing seem formal and long-winded.

### **A series of adjectives**

Use commas to separate a series of adjectives when each adjective modifies the noun and each comma could be replaced by the word *and*. For example: a *signed, binding* agreement means a *signed and binding* agreement.

## **3.6 Dash**

Use dashes, not hyphens, to separate phrases and words from the rest of a sentence or to express a range of numbers – see 4. *Numbers*.

### **Non-essential phrase**

Use dashes to enclose a non-essential phrase. That is, the word or phrase can be omitted without changing the essential meaning of the sentence. For example:

On 1 December 2014, the last element of justice and home affairs which was still conducted under the old third pillar decision-making rules – police and judicial co-operation in criminal matters – became subject to the usual rules.

You can also use commas or brackets to enclose a non-essential phrase.

### **Final phrase**

Use the dash to introduce a phrase at the end of a sentence or to replace a colon. For example:

Carer's leave will end six weeks after the death or on the date specified in the confirmation document – whichever is earlier.

### **Overuse**

Be careful when using dashes; they lose their impact if overused. Other punctuation marks such as the comma, semicolon, colon and brackets are usually preferable.

## **3.7 *Ellipsis***

An ellipsis (...) is a series of three full stops used to indicate omissions from quoted text. Do not insert spaces between an ellipsis and the surrounding text. For example:

"Better availability of childcare will play an important role in improving the quality of life...in these less-advantaged areas."

Do not put a full stop after an ellipsis at the end of a sentence.

## **3.8 *Exclamation mark***

Use an exclamation mark (!) only if it is part of an organisation's name or part of an extract from another source.

## **3.9 *Full stop***

Use a full stop at the end of each complete sentence unless it is a question. Insert only one space between the full stop and the first letter of the next sentence.

Use full stops after single initials, after initials in names, and after certain abbreviations.

Use a full stop at the end of an item in a list if it is a complete sentence. Note: if at least one item in the list contains a full sentence, each item has a full stop at the end.

Do not use a full stop at the end of headings, even if the text forms a complete sentence.

## **3.10 *Hyphen***

The rules on hyphens are uncertain and the exceptions are numerous. The general rules are consult a dictionary when in doubt and be as consistent as you can.

### **Compound adjectives**

A compound adjective is made up of two or more words that describe a noun. Use the hyphen to join the words of a compound adjective before a noun. For example:

The Domiciliary Care Allowance is a monthly means-tested payment.

Do not hyphenate a compound adjective when it comes *after* the noun. For example:

Your eligibility for the Domiciliary Care Allowance is means tested.

Do not hyphenate a compound adjective that contains an adverb ending in *ly*. For example: Advice is available to all *newly married* couples.

Do not hyphenate a compound adjective with capitals. For example: the *Health Service Executive* staff.

Do not hyphenate a compound adjective in a scientific term. For example: *potassium permanganate* solution.

### Prefixes

A prefix is an addition to the start of a word. It cannot stand alone as a word.

Examples are *pre*, *re*, *non*, *sub*. Words with prefixes are usually written as one word, such as *pretext*, *remarry* and *substandard*, but hyphens are used in certain cases to make the meaning clearer. Use a hyphen:

- To avoid confusion with another word. For example: *re-sign a contract* (as opposed to *resign from a job*).
- Where the prefix is repeated at the start of the word. For example: *re-release*.
- With the prefixes *self-* and *all-*. For example: *self-regulating*, *all-embracing*.
- With prefixes before initial capitals, before numbers and before dates. For example: in the *mid-1990s*, a *pre-October* election.
- To avoid an awkward collision of letters. This often applies when the last letter of the prefix is the same as the following letter, particularly if they are vowels. For example: *co-operate* (as opposed to *cohabit*), *re-establish* (as opposed to *rename*).

If the prefix ends in a vowel and is followed by a different vowel, the word does not usually require a hyphen. For example: *reapply* or *reinvent* (as opposed to *re-engagement*). Note the many exceptions for *co*. For example: *co-dependency*, *co-worker*.

Rules vary with *non*. For general vocabulary, check the entry in the dictionary. For example: *non-payment* but *nonconformist*. With newer expressions or technical expressions, use a hyphen. Do not use *non* as a stand-alone word. For example:

Use: non-contributory pension, non-EEA worker

Avoid: non contributory pension, non EEA worker

Do not use a hyphen after a prefix to indicate an omitted common element in a series. For example:

Use: provision of pre-school and after-school care

Avoid: provision of pre- and after-school care

### Suffixes

A suffix is an addition to the end of a word. It does not form a word by itself.

Do not use hyphens with common suffixes such as *-scape*, *-proof*, *-wide*, *-tight*, *-like*, and *-less*. For example: *landscape*, *waterproof*, *airtight*, *nationwide*, *lifelike*, *homeless*.

Do not use the suffix *-like* to create new combinations unless it is necessary to do so. For example: a *database-like* set of files (could be written as a set of files similar to a database)

## Conventions and exceptions

Note that conventions change over time. Some compound words become so familiar that they lose their hyphen. For example: *childcare*, *homework*, *website*, but, currently, *lo-call*. Other compound words ignore the rules above, such as those applying to words which have an awkward collision of letters and should use hyphens. For example: *withhold*, *override*.

### 3.11 Question mark

Only use the question mark at the end of a sentence that is a question. Do not use a question mark to suggest doubt or ambiguity.

### 3.12 Quotation marks

There are two types of quotation marks: single ( ' ') and double ( " "). Use double quotation marks to enclose quotes from direct speech and publications or documents.

Use single quotation marks in online text to highlight a cross-reference to a nearby section and refer the reader to the location by using *above*, *below* or *following* as appropriate. For example: *See 'Where to apply' below.*

Use single quotation marks to enclose a quote within a quote or in a bibliography to enclose the title of an article or chapter from a book.

Do not use quotation marks to highlight technical words or phrases; use italic for this and always provide an explanation. See also 8.5. *Quotations*.

### 3.13 Semicolon

#### Main clauses with no conjunction

Use the semicolon to link two main clauses that are not connected by a conjunction such as *and* or *but*. For example: Send a crossed cheque or money order; do not send cash.

The clauses linked by a semicolon should contain closely related ideas; otherwise, present them as two separate sentences.

#### List items that contain commas

Use the semicolon to separate list items where some of the items contain commas. For example:

Other care placements include, for example, young people subject to a care order but in a detention centre; placement in a residential centre for young people with a disability; and young people placed in supported lodgings.

It is generally better to present a series of items as a vertical list.

### 3.14 Slash

Do not use the forward slash (/) in normal text to replace the words *and*, *or*, or *and/or* as this causes ambiguity. For example:

Use: The employee is entitled to carer's leave and parental leave.

Use: The employee is entitled to carer's leave or parental leave.

Use: The employee is entitled to carer's leave and/or parental leave.

Avoid: The employee is entitled to carer's/parental leave.

You can use the forward slash in certain well-established phrases and abbreviations. For example:

*c/o* for *care of* in addresses

<https://www.mabs.ie/>

N/A for *not applicable* in forms

120 km/h

Spell out the phrase if you are in any doubt. Do not use the backslash (\).

## Chapter 4: Numbers

This section describes the general rules for using numbers and then defines the format for using numbers with dates, time of day, fractions, decimals and percentages, measurements, and money.

### 4.1 *Digits or spelled out*

For reports and other publications spell out numbers from zero to nine and use digits for 10 and above. For example: *nine houses, 12 districts, 55 years old, aged three months*. For online writing, use digits for all numbers – see *Appendix 4*.

Be ready, however, to apply the many exceptions to this rule:

- Use digits with dates, abbreviated units of time and measurement, money, decimals and percentages, tables, and page references.
- Do not start a sentence with a digit. Spell out the number or find another way to start the sentence. This also applies to sentences starting with a percentage.
- Spell out non-specific numbers. For example: *in the thousands*, not *in the 1,000s*.
- Do not mix digits and spelled-out numbers if you are making a comparison or have a series of numbers, even if some are below 10. For example: Children aged 8–15 years not Children aged *eight*–15 years.
- Mix formats, however, if it will help to distinguish between two different sets of numbers. For example: *2 five-page forms*, not *two five-page forms*.

### 4.2 *Ordinal numbers (first, second and so on)*

In general, spell out ordinal numbers in normal text, including those greater than ninth. For online writing use digits for all ordinal numbers. For example: *twenty-first birthday*, not *21st birthday* but *20th century*, not *twentieth century* (an exception).

Use digits in addresses for phrases such as *4th Floor*.

#### **First or firstly**

Use either first or firstly. Any of these combinations is acceptable: first, secondly, thirdly or first, second, third or firstly, secondly, thirdly.

### 4.3 *Forming plural numbers*

Add an s to digits. Do not insert an apostrophe. For example: under *18s*, not under *18's*.

For numbers that are spelled out, you generally form the plural in the usual way by adding an s. Note: *sixes* for *six*, *twenties* for *twenty*.

### 4.4 *Singular or plural*

For numbers such as *hundred, thousand, million and billion*, use the singular for a specific number and use the plural if the number is indefinite. For example: *67 million people* and *millions of people*.

Measurements that are part of a compound phrase are singular. For example: a *10-year passport*, not a *10-years passport*.

### 4.5 *Number ranges*

If you are giving information that spans a period or a range of measurements or numbers, the format to use depends on the construction.

With *from* and *between*, use these formats: *From 2013 to 2015*, *Between the ages of 20 and 23*.

You can substitute a dash for *to* in ranges that use or imply the construction *in the range* or *during the period*. Omit the space on either side. For example: *14–23 Adelaide Road*, *During the years 2011–2014*.

Use a dash if the end date is an undetermined future time such as in the phrase *2014–*.

Do not mix formats if you are comparing ranges. It is more effective, as well as good style, to be consistent. For example:

Use: This applies to children aged 4 to 5 years and 11 to 12 years only.

Use: This applies to children aged 4–5 years and 11–12 years only.

Avoid: This applies to children aged 4 to 5 years and 11–12 years only.

Do not use a dash after *from* or after *between*. For example: *from 30 to 40*, not *from 30–40* and *between €80 and €100*, not *between €80–€100*.

#### 4.6 Commas with numbers

In general, insert a comma with numbers of 1,000 or more. Insert the comma every third digit from the right. For example: *€35,000,000* or *1,346 square metres*.

There are some exceptions. Do not insert a comma in page numbers, addresses, years, or numbers used in a technical context such as engine size. For example: Page *1032* not *1,032* and *1400cc* not *1,400cc*.

#### 4.7 Hyphens with numbers

Use hyphens in numbers from twenty-one to ninety-nine, twenty-first to ninety-ninth, and in fractions. For example: *fifty-third* place, *two-thirds* of all claimants.

Use a hyphen in a compound word or phrase involving a number. For example: *a three-month* period, *a 12-year-old* child.

#### 4.8 Thousand, million and billion

##### **Specific numbers: two thousand, 15,000, 20 million, eight billion**

For rounded sums below 10, spell out the whole number. For example: *nine thousand*, not *9,000*, *three million*, not *3,000,000*. For online writing, use digits for all numbers – see *Appendix 4*.

Otherwise, use digits with thousands. Do not use the abbreviation *k* for *thousand*, even with money or measurements. For example: *a grant of €100,000*, not *a grant of €100k*.

For specific mixed numbers with millions or billions, use digits in decimal format as required. Spell out *million*. Do not use the abbreviation *m* for *million* or *bn* for *billion*. For example: *3.35 million people* not *3,350,000* or *three million three hundred and fifty thousand*.

Specific numbers are singular. For example: use *two million*, not *two millions*.

##### **Unspecified numbers: thousands and millions**

Spell out non-specific numbers in phrases such as *thousands of times*, *millions of litres*. These indefinite quantities are plural, not singular.

## 4.9 Dates

### A specific date

Use this format: day month year, with no commas. Spell out the month in full and use digits for the day and years. For example: *15 January 2015* not *15th January 2015* nor *15/01/15*.

Do not shorten the year, or abbreviate the month, or use numbers to represent the month, unless the demands of a table require this.

### A named day with the date

Insert a comma after the day. For example: *Friday, 4 March 2012*.

## 4.10 Time of day

### am and pm and minutes

Use digits with *am* and *pm* to express the time of day. Do not use the 24-hour clock.

Do not insert a space between the number and the abbreviation. Do not insert a full stop or a space after the letters in the abbreviations *am* and *pm*. Always use lower case. For example: *11am to 3pm*.

Insert a full stop between the hour and minutes. For example: *2.20pm*.

Avoid ambiguity with *12am* and *12pm* by using the format *12 midnight* or *12 noon* to distinguish between night and day.

### o'clock

In general, do not use terms such as *o'clock* in formal writing. If required, spell out the numbers in expressions such as *eleven o'clock*, *half past ten* and *a quarter to twelve*. Do not insert hyphens between the component parts. For example: use *half past four*, not *half-past four*.

Use *o'clock* with the full hour only. Do not say *half past one o'clock*. Do not use *am* or *pm* with the term *o'clock*.

## 4.11 Fractions, decimals and percentages

### Fractions

Spell out fractions. For example: *one-third*, not *1/3*.

If the fraction is used with a whole number, insert *and* between the number and the fraction. For example: *five and three-quarters*. Prefer decimals to fractions for this type of amount; they are easier to read.

### Decimals

Use digits for decimals. Insert a point between the whole number and the decimal. For example: *1.75*.

Insert a zero before the point if the value is less than 1. For example: use *0.65*, not *.65*. This does not apply to money; use the format *65 cent* or *65c*.

### Percentages

Use digits and the symbol % instead of *per cent* when you are giving numerical information. For example: use *6%*, not *6 per cent* or *six per cent*.

Try to avoid starting a sentence with a percentage figure. Start the sentence using terms such as *A total of*, *Almost*, *The*. If this is not possible, spell out the percentage

information. For example: *Forty-seven per cent* of the population (Note: you could rephrase this as *Exactly 47%...*).

Use *percentage* if you are writing in general terms. For example: *only a small percentage of the population*.

Do not use %age as an abbreviation for *percentage*.

Take care with the maths when you are using percentages. For example: If queries rise from 25 to 50, this is a 100% increase. It is not a 25% increase or a 50% increase.

### **Making comparisons**

Do not mix fractions with decimals or with percentages when you are making comparisons. This reduces the impact of the comparison and it can be confusing. For example:

Use: Just under 25% of that age group smoke now compared with over 33% a decade ago.

Avoid: Just under 25% of that age group smoke now compared with over a third a decade ago.

### **Rounding**

When giving information on money, be precise and give the exact amount. In other situations, prefer rounding to the nearest whole number if possible. Avoid using more than one decimal place unless you have to be very specific.

## **4.12 Measurements**

If you are spelling out a unit of measurement, apply the usual rules for spelling out numbers or using digits: for online writing use digits for all numbers; for reports and printed publications spell out whole numbers below nine and use digits for 10 and above; use digits with decimals and spell out fractions. For example: *two minutes, 35 hours, four and a half days, 7.5 kilometres*.

In a compound phrase or word involving a number and a measurement, use a hyphen to link the number and the measurement and keep the measurement singular. For example: *a three-month wait, a 48-hour week*.

### **Abbreviated units of measurement**

Use the full form for a unit of measurement unless your topic requires repeated use of the measurement, such as in a table or list explaining speed limits. Spell out units of measurement in full the first time you use them. Check the capitals and format for abbreviated units of measurements in a dictionary.

Use digits with abbreviated units of measurement. Do not insert a space between the number and the unit. For example: Temperatures above 27°C are not comfortable for working.

## **4.13 Money**

In online text, tables and normal printed text, use digits and add the currency symbol before the amount with no space after the symbol – see also 7.6 *Tables*. For example: €38, £65 *sterling*. Do not use other formats. For example: use €560, not *EUR 560*.

A number of countries use the dollar. Distinguish between the different currencies by inserting the name of the country before *dollar*. For example: *10 US dollars, 35 Australian dollars*.

If you give an amount of money in different currencies, include the rate that you used. If you are comparing values of money over different periods, give a date reference. Use the decimal format with money as required. For example: €7.65.

**euro and cent**

Always use in lower case. Do not add an *s* for the plural forms. For example: use €7, not *7 euros* or *7 Euro* and *53 cent*, not *53 cents* or *53 Cent*.

After the abbreviated form for *cent*, do not insert a full stop or a space between the numeral and the symbol. For example: *53c*, not *53 c*. Use this form only in tables.

If giving a value below one euro, do not insert a zero or decimal point before the amount. For example: use *65 cent*, not *.65 euro* or *0.65 eur*.

## Chapter 5: Contact details and names

Use the formats given below for printed publications as well as online text, unless they conflict with the overall design of the printed publication.

### 5.1 Addresses, phone numbers and other contact details

In normal text, locate address details at the end of a section if possible. This applies to online and printed publications. Enter the address details as you would on an envelope: give each element a separate line and do not insert a comma at the end of a line. Do not insert a comma after the number of the street. For example:

Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport  
44 Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

If you need to give the address before the end of a section, separate it from the surrounding text by inserting a line space before and after the address.

Use digits for numbers in addresses. For example: *2nd Floor*.

#### Exceptional punctuation in lists of addresses

In lists of addresses, use the above format if possible. If each element cannot be entered on a separate line, insert commas after the intermediate elements and put a full stop at the end. For example:

Irish Sports Council, 21 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin 2.

#### Abbreviations with addresses

Use these abbreviations in postal addresses: *St* for *Saint*, no full stop; *Co.* for *County*, with a full stop. Do not use abbreviations for *Road* and *Street*.

#### Phone numbers

In general, use these formats:

(01) 809 0600	1890 773 462
(071) 402 5500	+353 1 284 1166
087 166 1835	0761 07 9000

For local and national numbers, always insert the area code in brackets before the local number. For example: *(01)* for Dublin, *(071)* for Sligo.

Do not place brackets around the prefix of a mobile number. For example: use *086*, not *(086)*.

For international codes from a land line or a mobile: insert the + sign followed by the appropriate international country code. Insert a space after the country code. Delete the zero at the start of the area code or mobile prefix. For example, if called from outside Ireland:

(01) 607 2827 becomes +353 1 607 2827  
087 533 1233 becomes +353 87 533 1233

#### Arranging the numbers

Arrange the seven-digit numbers in groups of three and four. If there are fewer digits, avoid a string that has more than five numbers.

Do not split up numbers that represent the area code or a special tariff. Use the layout given in the source material. For example: *1850 67 33 33*.

Identify special tariff numbers before the start of the number. Include any qualifications in bracket at the end. For example:

Lo-call: 1890 223 030 (10am to 5pm, Monday–Friday)

Freephone: 1800 252 524

### Layout of other contact details

Identify phone numbers, fax numbers, email and web addresses by using the appropriate prefix followed by a colon. Include any qualifications associated with the phone number, such as *24 hours* or *Monday–Saturday*, after the number.

Use these prefixes:

- *Tel* for telephone (unless it is a special tariff number)
- *Fax* for facsimile
- *Email* for email address
- *Web* for Web address – (*www* may be omitted in web addresses, for example, *welfare.ie*)

## 5.2 Names of organisations and countries

### Organisations

Always use the correct official name for an organisation. Refer to the organisation's letterhead or website for guidance. For example: Use *Department of Social Protection*, not *Social Welfare Department*.

Do not invert elements of a name in the manner used in an index. For example: use *Irish Insurance Federation*, not *Insurance Federation, Irish*.

### Singular not plural

Organisations are single entities. They take singular verbs, not plural. For example:

Use: The UN is mandated to...

Use: Aim Family Services is a voluntary organisation...

Avoid: Aim Family Services are a voluntary organisation...

### Countries

Use official names for countries.

*Ireland* is the full name laid down in the Constitution or use *the State*. Do not use *Éire*, *Republic of Ireland* or *Irish Republic*.

Use *UK* when referring to England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Do not use *UK and Northern Ireland*. The official EU name is United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Great Britain refers to England, Scotland and Wales. Use *Northern Ireland*; do not use *Ulster* or *the Six Counties*.

Use *United States* or *US* for United States of America. Since *US* is so well known, there is no need to spell it out – even with the first use. Do not use *America*.

Use *the Netherlands* if you are referring to the entire state. *Holland* is only part of the country.

Countries take singular verbs even when they appear to be plural. For example: The *United States* is the largest consumer of oil.

### 5.3 *Regions of Ireland*

If you are referring to a general direction, use the standard conventions: no initial capital, a hyphen in compounds such as *south-west*. For example:

Use: The Red Line runs south-west to east

Avoid: The Red Line runs South West to East

Use initial capitals if you are referring to a recognised geographical region or political entity. For example: *Northern Ireland, South Leinster, the Midlands*.

Organisations and agencies use different conventions for referring to regions around the State. Select the format used by the originating organisations (for capitals, hyphens and so on).

## Chapter 6: Capital letters

Initial capital letters are used at the start of a sentence, with the personal pronoun *I*, and to distinguish proper nouns. A proper noun is a name or term that applies to a specific thing or person.

### 6.1 Place names, regions and rivers

Use capitals for the names of recognised geographical areas. This includes regions which may be popularly known by a particular name as well as their geographical place name. For example: *Cork, Louth, Leinster, Temple Bar, New Zealand*.

Only use capitals for compass points if they refer to an established geographical or political region. For example: *Northern Ireland, West Cork* but *southern Ireland, western seaboard*.

Give an initial capital to *river* only when it follows the name of the river. For example: *river Slaney, Slaney River*.

Use capitals for other topographical terms such as *lough* if they occur either before or after an established place name. For example: *Lough Erne, Macgillycuddy's Reeks*.

This also applies to terms such as *street, building, bridge and park* if they are directly associated with an official name. For example: *Phoenix Park, Thomond Bridge*.

Do not use capitals for these terms if they occur independently of the place name in a phrase, even if you have used capitals for them earlier in the text. For example:

Airlink operates bus services from *Dublin City Centre to Dublin Airport*. The average journey time from *the city centre to the airport* is 30 minutes.

### 6.2 Weekdays, months, festivals, seasons

Use capitals for named days of the week and named months. This also applies to specific holidays and festivals. For example: *Tuesday, March, Easter*.

Do not use capitals for the seasons of the year. For example: use *autumn*, not *Autumn*.

### 6.3 Organisations and groups

Use capitals for specific names of organisations, government departments and institutions unless they do otherwise. This includes committees and tribunals formed for a particular purpose. For example: *Department of Finance, District Court, An Taisce*.

In general, do not use capitals for prepositions or conjunctions in official names unless they occur at the start of a sentence. Similarly, no capital for *the* before an organisation's name unless it forms part of the established name. For example: Use *the Office of Public Works*, not *The Office Of Public Works* and use *The Irish Times*, not *the Irish Times*

Within a paragraph, you may have to refer to a particular organisation on a number of occasions. If there is no suitable abbreviation, use capitals for a recognisable component of the proper name if possible. For example: *the Department* for the *Department of Finance*. Do not refer to *the Department* without having previously used the full name.

#### General terms

Do not use capitals if you are referring to a collective group or a general term. For example: use *District Court* for the specific type of court and *court* for the general term.

Certain exceptions are made for example: *Local Health Office*. Always use capitals for these terms.

An exception is also made for *Garda* and *Gardaí*. Use *An Garda Síochána* for the official title. Use *the Gardaí* for the collective group. Use *Garda* in terms such as *Garda station*. Similarly, use *Garda* and *Gardaí* in articles on justice and related issues, but never where the terms appear in lists with other professions. For example:

Use: Your passport form may be signed by a garda, lawyer, medical doctor...

Avoid: This regulation applies to childcare workers, public health nurses, Gardaí...

### The Government, the State and the Constitution

Use capital *g* in *the government* only if you are referring to the body of people who make up the current Irish Government. Use lower case for foreign governments, past Irish governments, general references and government departments. For example:

The Strategic Task Force on Alcohol made a number of recommendations to the Government.

Every government in the EU has signed up.

Note: capital *g* in *eGovernment*.

Similarly, use capital *c* in *the Cabinet* only if you are referring to the Irish Cabinet and in *the Constitution* only if you are referring to the Irish Constitution.

Use initial capitals when referring to a specific institution in the EU or other countries, but not if using terms on their own in a general sense. For example:

Each state nominates one member of the European Commission.

This will affect the constitutions in a number of states.

Use capital *s* in *the State* when you are using the term as a synonym for Ireland. For example: The High Court reserved judgement in a bid by *the State* to appeal.

## 6.4 Titles and jobs

Capital letters indicate a title. Lower case indicates a job role. Insert the job title before the name of the person. Use capital letters for the title and do not insert a comma after the title. For example: use *Chairperson John Brown* and not *Chairperson, John Brown*.

Inserting a job title after a person's name indicates an explanation of this person's role, not their title. In these cases, use lower case for the job title and insert a comma after the person's name. For example: *John Kelly, the managing director*, will present the report.

### Specific titles

Use capitals for these terms when you are referring to the current holder of the title. This applies even if there is no name attached to the role in your text:

The Taoiseach	Minister for Finance
President (only the Irish President)	Attorney General

Use lower case for general references to these roles and for former office holders. For example: *previous taoisigh, former attorney general*.

## Job roles

Use lower case for general terms even if you use the singular form. For example:

Use: The public health nurse can help with this.

Avoid: The Public Health Nurse can help with this.

Use a capital for *minister* if you are referring to a member of the current Irish Government. For example:

Use: The Minister for Health will introduce this Bill in the Autumn Session.

Use: Several Ministers took part in today's discussion.

Use: A number of former finance ministers were called to the conference.

## 6.5 Legal vocabulary

Use lower case with *court* unless mentioning a specific court such as the *Circuit Court*. Also, use lower case with *judge* unless inserting the term before a person's name.

Use capitals for *Act*, *Amendment*, *Bill* and *Statutory Instrument* even when using these in a general sense. Use capitals for other terms such as *code of practice* or *article* only if they are linked to a specific piece of legislation.

## 6.6 People, languages and religion

Use initial capital letters when referring to people from established national and ethnic groups, and to their languages. Also, use initial capitals when referring to established religions. For example:

French, Nigerian, Romanian, Travellers,

Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism

## 6.7 Benefits, allowances and reports

Use initial capital letters with specific names. Use lower case with general references. For example:

The Rural Social Scheme is an income support scheme for farmers.

The Probation and Welfare Service may prepare a victim impact report.

## 6.8 Capital letters to avoid

Do not use capitals for effect or emphasis. Using full capitals can seem like SHOUTING. Use italic instead or introduce your point with the term *Note:* to draw attention to something you think is particularly important.

## Chapter 7: Lists and tables

### 7.1 Lists

There are different conventions for punctuating lists. These are complex; they can be confusing for the writer and distracting for the reader. The punctuation rules below present a single straightforward approach aimed at clarity and consistency.

Use a table for complex numerical data that is too complicated for a list, especially if it involves comparisons. See 7.6. *Tables* for more on this.

#### Lists within sentences

Use a list within a sentence to present a short series of words or brief phrases.

Use commas to separate the list items. Punctuate the sentence as normal – see 3. *Punctuation*. For example:

Examples of controlled substances are cannabis, cocaine, heroin and amphetamines.

Do not insert a comma before the final *and* unless the comma is required to avoid ambiguity – see 3.5. *Comma*.

Use the semicolon to separate list items if any of the items contain commas – see 3.12. *Semicolon*.

### 7.2 Vertical lists

Use a vertical list to present a series of several items or a series of longer, more complex items. For example:

To get Jobseeker's Allowance you must:

- Be unemployed
- Be capable of work
- Be available for and genuinely seeking work
- Satisfy the means test

Use bullets if the order of the items is not significant, as in the example above.

Use numbers or letters if the order of the items is significant, such as a series of instructions or a series of sequential steps. For example:

To become a fully qualified driver, you need to:

1. Pass the theory test
2. Obtain a learner permit
3. Pass the driving test

#### Punctuation in vertical lists

Use an introductory phrase for each list. End the phrase with a colon and follow it with one line space. Use an initial capital at the start of each list item.

Do not use a full stop at the end of a list item which is not a complete sentence, as in the examples above.

Use a full stop at the end of a list item that is a complete sentence, or consists of more than one complete sentence. For example:

To ensure that this happens, you need to do two things:

- Give your employer your PPSN (Personal Public Service Number). This number is your unique personal identification number.
- Apply for a Certificate of Tax Credits. You need to complete an application form to do this (called Form 12A).

Be consistent with full stops. That is, within each list, either none of the list items should end with a full stop, or all of the list items should end with a full stop.

### Parallelism in vertical lists

Ensure that all list items are parallel as far as possible. That is, the items should match the introductory phrase and should be the same type of word or phrase, such as a noun phrase or a verb phrase.

For example, in the first version of the list below, the items are not parallel. The items have been made parallel in the second version of the list:

Labels on pre-packaged food must display the:

- Name of the food
- The net quantity in metric units
- Listing the ingredients
- Giving special storage instructions

Labels on pre-packaged food must display:

- The name of the food
- The net quantity in metric units
- The list of ingredients
- Any special storage instructions

In the following example of a parallel list, each item begins with an embedded heading set in bold, followed by a consistently phrased explanation:

Two types of power of attorney are allowed under Irish law:

- **General power of attorney** – this ceases when the donor becomes incapacitated
- **Enduring power of attorney** – this takes effect when the donor becomes incapacitated

In the following example of a parallel list, each list item is an instruction. This is the preferred way to write instructions.

To calculate your tax liability:

- a) Take your total income after you pay your superannuation contributions and after any other allowances you may have.
- b) Apply the standard rate of tax to income below the standard rate cut-off point.
- c) Apply the top rate of tax to the rest of your income.
- d) Add b and c.
- e) Subtract the tax credits to which you are entitled. This leaves you with the amount of tax you have to pay.

### 7.3 *Logical relationships in lists*

In each list, the items are logically related: there is an *and* relationship or an *or* relationship. In most lists, this does not need to be stated explicitly.

In some lists, however, it is necessary to show explicitly the logical relationship between the items. In general, it is best to clarify this in the introductory phrase. For example:

If you are not Irish, you will need to produce evidence of your Irish address and one of the following documents:

- Your passport
- Your national identity card
- Your immigration card

If the logical relationship cannot be clarified in the introductory phrase, you can insert *and* or *or* at the end of the appropriate list items. Take care with this, however, as it can be difficult for the reader to follow and can cause ambiguity, as in the following example:

If you are not Irish, you will need to produce the following documents:

- Your passport, or
- Your national identity card, or
- Your immigration card, and
- Evidence of your Irish address

### 7.4 *Grouping items in a list*

How you arrange the items in your list depends on your subject and the point you are trying to convey to your readers. For example:

- If your list concerns how to make an application, arrange the items in chronological order (time).
- If your list gives information on how to qualify for an allowance, arrange the items from the most important to the least important (hierarchy).
- If the items in your list have no apparent hierarchy or do not appear to fall into any particular order, arrange the items alphabetically.

### 7.5 *Lists within lists*

In general, avoid creating lists within lists. It is generally better to create two simple lists rather than one complex list.

Where you feel that a list within a list would be useful for the reader, use the dash to introduce the sub-items. For example:

Discrimination is prohibited within employment. This applies to:

- Conditions of employment, including dismissal
- Pay, where two people are doing like work. Like work occurs where:
  - People perform the same work
  - Their work is of similar nature
  - Their work is different but of equal value

Avoid inserting more than one sub-list.

Some topics are complex. For example, the qualifying conditions for some social welfare allowances may involve several further sub-sets of qualifying conditions. In these situations, use the following guidelines:

- Break up your lists and put them under topic headings.
- Treat your first list like the topic sentence in a paragraph: that is, put the most important list first. This is usually a summary of the main points for the entire topic.
- Use cross-references or links to point the reader to the sub-lists that give further related details. Let the readers decide if they want to follow up.

## 7.6 Tables

Use tables to present numerical data that is too complex to be explained clearly in a list or in normal text. A table should have at least two columns and two rows, not including the column headings.

### Headings

Introduce a table with either one or more introductory sentences or a heading. Do not use an introductory phrase followed by a colon.

Set a table heading in bold and identify each column with a suitable heading. Use capitals for the first letter and any proper names, and do not use punctuation at the end of the line such as a full stop or colon.

In printed publications, set each column heading in bold. When comparing data, make column headings as similar as possible.

### FIS income limits in 2015

<b>If you have:</b>	<b>And your weekly family income is less than:</b>
One child	€506
Two children	€602
Three children	€703

### Abbreviations

Make column headings and text entries as concise as possible. However, do not shorten words or use abbreviations that could be incomprehensible to the reader. For example: shorten *Rate of stamp duty* to *Stamp duty*, not *Rate stmp dty*.

Well-known abbreviations are acceptable, such as *N/A* for *not applicable* or *min.* for *minimum*. If you use an abbreviation formed from the initial letters of a phrase, make sure that you have previously introduced it.

Other general rules on tables are as follows:

- Use digits in tables and column headings. For longer tables, the currency symbol can be in the column heading, rather than listed in front of each amount
- Align text to the left.
- Align a column of digits to the right.
- Insert any footnotes directly below the table. Use an asterisk if there is only one footnote; use digits if there is more than one.

- Do not mix formats. Within the same section, use a series of tables to display the same type of data rather than mix tables with lists.
- Be consistent with plurals. If the column heading is singular, use the singular form in the rows beneath.
- Avoid tables that fill more than one screen or printed page. If the table breaks onto the following page, repeat the column headings.

## Chapter 8: References

### 8.1 Referring to publications

#### Titles

In printed material such as booklets, italicise the entire title.

In online material:

- Italicise a reference to the title of a publication.
- Do not italicise a link to a publication. Highlight the title, and no other text, when you create the link.

In general, use capitals for the first word and all the main words of a title and subtitle but not for conjunctions, prepositions, articles or pronouns.

In general, use a colon to separate the subtitle from the main title and use capitals as usual. Check your source material. If it uses another format, such as a dash, use that format and not a colon. For example:

Burke, Sara. Irish apartheid: healthcare inequality in Ireland

#### Articles within other publications, papers from a conference

This usually applies to bibliographies in longer documents such as social policy reports. Italicise the title of the publication. Insert single quotation marks around the title of the chapter or paper. For example:

'Welfare reform and the employment of lone parents' in Dickens, R., P.Gregg and J.Wadsworth. *The labour market under New Labour*.

#### Use the format in the source material

Use the rules above for creating your own documents and as the default format. However, check and use the exact title as given in the source material.

#### Publishing organisations

Most references in public service information are to publications produced by organisations. These publications generally do not have a named author.

When you refer to such a publication, it is sufficient to give only the organisation name (referred to as the publishing organisation below). You must, however, make the contact details of the organisation available somewhere in your own publication.

Name the publishing organisation in online references that are not links and in references that occur in printed material.

In running text, insert the details of the publishing organisation before or after the title. Separate the title from the source with a dash or brackets. For example,

*Information for School Leavers* – a leaflet published by the Citizens Information Board

*Information for School Leavers* (a leaflet published by the Citizens Information Board)

It is not necessary to repeat the name of the publishing organisation if you are already discussing the organisation that produced the publication.

Online, the reader can link to a document, so it is not always necessary to refer to the publisher. For example:

You may find this [guide to possession proceedings \(pdf\)](#) useful as you prepare to go to court.

When linking to the actual title of a document on citizensinformation.ie, insert comma before title and use initial capital, for example:

Details are in our document, [Your childcare options](#).

Generally, when linking to a document on citizensinformation.ie there is no comma and no initial capital, for example:

Details are in our [document on childcare](#).

### Named authors

In running text, insert the name of the author when making a general reference to a publication or quoting an extract. It is not always necessary to name the publication title, as long as you include a bibliography. Nor is it necessary to include the date in running text, unless this author has more than one publication listed in your bibliography.

### Page references

In booklets and other printed publications, avoid cross-references to specific pages. Refer to a section or chapter instead if possible.

Reserve page references for bibliographies. Use digits. Use a dash if you are giving a range of pages. Do not abbreviate *page* to *p.p.* or *p.* For example: use *page 23*, not *p.23* and *pages 50–58*, not *Pages 50 to 58* or *p.p. 50–58*.

## 8.2 Cross-references

Cross-references indicate where to find additional information on a specific topic, either elsewhere in the same document or in a different one.

Do not insert a cross-reference:

- If you can repeat the important details quickly and simply on the same page.
- If the information is essential to understand the topic. Give the necessary details even if this means repetition. (In these situations, you can give a summary of the main points and then insert a cross-reference to the source where the reader can find further information.)

If the information is on the same page or within a few pages, use *above*, *below* or *following* as appropriate. In online text, do not insert a link in these situations. Instead, surround the relevant section heading with single quotation marks. For example: *See 'How to apply' below.*

### Inserting cross-references in printed documents

Italicise the title of a subheading or chapter, appendix, document or other publication in a cross-reference.

Use capitals for terms such as *chapter*, *appendix*, *section*, *figure* or *table*, only if they are followed by a number or letter. Do not use a capital for *page*. For example:

See Appendix A for further details on...

See pages 41–43 for details on how to apply for entitlements to...

Cross-references break the flow of a document. Introduce them with clear direct phrases to minimise the interruption. For example:

Maternity Benefit is paid for 26 weeks. For information on payment rates, see...

### 8.3 Further reading and bibliographies

#### Further reading sections

At the end of a section in a booklet or other short printed text, you may wish to give details of other useful publications. Give the title first and follow it with the name of the publishing organisation, or the name of the author if there is one. Separate the organisation from the title with a dash. For example:

*Choosing a school* – National Council for Special Education

List the titles in alphabetical order.

#### Bibliographies

A bibliography lists all the publications or other sources you have consulted during research for your own publication. You may not have quoted from these sources or referenced them in your text. Publications listed under the heading *References* must have been quoted or referenced in the text. Use the term *Bibliography* (rather than *References*) unless you are confident that you have referred to all the sources listed. Insert a bibliography at the end of a publication, after any appendixes or glossary and before the index.

The formats for bibliographies vary depending upon the complexity of the document. Arrange the entries alphabetically according to the author's surname or the name of the publishing organisation. If the name of the publishing organisation appears in the title, insert only the title.

Follow this format for arranging the publication details of a book:

author surname, initials or first name. *Title* (in italic) if a published document: *subtitle* (in italic) if any, volume number if appropriate, edition number if appropriate. Place of publication: publisher, date.

For example:

Reid, Sarah. *The Devil's Handbook*. 2nd edition. Dublin: Round Hall Press, 2014.

Citizens Information Board. *Guide to Entitlements for People with Disabilities*. Dublin: 2015.

Lunn, Pete and Frances Ruane. *Using Evidence to Inform Policy*. Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 2014.

Hills, J., et. al. *Wealth in the UK: Distribution, Accumulation and Policy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

If the publication has more than one author, insert the names of the authors in the order given in the publication. Use the format shown in the example above for *Lunn*: for the first author, put the surname first as usual; for the remaining authors of the same publication, insert the surname after the initials or first name. If there are more than three authors, insert the name of the first author only and follow this with the phrase *et al*: see the entry for *Hills* above.

For an article in another publication with a named author, follow the format in this example:

Bastagli, F. and J.Hills. 'Wealth, accumulation, ageing and house prices' in Hills, J., et. al. *Wealth in the UK: Distribution, Accumulation and Policy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

For an article in another publication such as a periodical, follow the format in this example:

Jenkins, S. and J.Rigg. 'Disability and disadvantage: selection, onset and duration effects' in *Journal of Social Policy*, Vol. 35 (3), pages 479–501. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

When citing electronic sources in a bibliography, follow this format:

name of the author or publishing organisation. *Title* (in italic) with other details such as subtitle or edition as appropriate. Date you accessed the material. Web address

For example, in a printed bibliography:

Birmingham City University. *How to write a report*. Accessed 23 June 2015. Available at <http://library.bcu.ac.uk/learner/writingguides/1.02%20Reports.htm>

Note that the Web address would be a link in an online document.

## 8.4 Referring to legislation

Use the short title of an Act when referring to it in your writing. Always give the date and any particulars such as an Amendment. Follow the format used in the source material for capitals and date ranges. Do not insert a comma before the date. For example:

the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997  
the Terms of Employment (Information) Acts 1994 and 2001  
the Redundancy Payments Acts 1967 to 2007 (for online writing use hyphen instead of 'to')

Use capitals for *Act*, *Amendment*, *Bill*, *Article*, *Regulation*, *Directive* and *Statutory Instrument*, even in non-specific contexts. Refer to *sections* in lower case unless the word is at the beginning of a sentence, but use *Section 11 of the X Act* if referring to a specific section. For example:

The Act may become law...

When citing EU Directives, provide the full reference number. For example: *EU Directive 2008/104/EC*.

Refer to sections of Acts and Statutory Instruments in parentheses. For example:

The list of countries whose citizens do not require a visa to enter Ireland is defined in the Immigration Act 2004 (Visas) Order 2014 (SI 473/2014).

The Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2011 (Section 33) makes provision for civil partners to receive treatment equal to married couples in the context of citizenship matters.

## 8.5 Quotations

Take care with quotations. Always give the source. If you are unsure of the exact quotation, use indirect speech instead.

Use quotations sparingly when writing public service information. In general, use your own words rather than a quoted extract.

### Embedded quotations

An embedded quotation is a quotation inserted in a paragraph. It runs on naturally in the flow of the text and may be a word or a phrase, or as much as a couple of sentences. If your quotation takes up more than five lines, treat it as an extract.

Use double quotation marks to enclose an embedded quotation and apply punctuation as in any sentence. For instance, use capitals for the start of the quotation only if it starts the sentence or if the first word is a proper noun. For example:

The Code of Conduct on Mortgage Arrears defines primary residence to include “a residential property in this State which is the only residential property owned by the borrower”.

### **Extracts**

Break off your quotation from the surrounding text if it takes up more than four lines or does not fit naturally into the surrounding text. This type of quotation is known as an extract or displayed quotation. In an online quoted extract:

- Use a colon to introduce the quotation
- Insert a line space before and after the quoted extract
- Enclose the extract with double quotation marks (including any final punctuation such as a full stop)

For example:

Section 14 of the Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act 1994 defines riot as:

“Where –

- a) 12 or more persons who are present together at any place (public or private) use or threaten to use unlawful violence for a common purpose, and
- b) the conduct of these persons, taken together, is such as would cause a person of reasonable firmness present at that place to fear for his or another person’s safety.”

## Chapter 9: Common errors

### 9.1 *A and an*

Pronunciation, not spelling, is the guideline for deciding whether you should put a or *an* before a word.

Use *an* before words beginning with a vowel sound. Otherwise, use *a*. For example:

a benefit

a European trend

an allowance

an EU trend

an hour

a UN resolution

See also A, an and the in 1.12 Abbreviations and acronyms.

### 9.2 *Agreement – singular and plural*

Use a singular verb with a singular subject; use a plural verb with a plural subject. In most sentences this is quite clear, but there are troublesome cases. For example:

The Board of Management *has* responsibility (singular)

The members of the board *decide* today (plural)

Neither the pet nor its owner *is* allowed (singular)

Every one of the patients in the two wards *was* vaccinated (singular)

Each of the employers and employees in the schemes *is* entitled (singular)

None of the prisoners *was* released (singular)

The size of the imported cars and their trailers *is* recorded (singular)

#### Collective nouns

Collective nouns describe a group. Examples are *number, committee, family, couple, public* and *staff*. These nouns can take a singular or a plural verb depending upon the context. In general, if you write about the group acting as a unit, use a singular verb. If you write about the group acting as individuals, use a plural verb. For example:

A council *does* not decide on rates or borrow money... (singular verb; the council is acting as a unit)

The council *are* meeting the Taoiseach... (plural verb; council members are acting individually)

The number of social welfare benefits *has* increased... (singular verb; this is about the total number which is a single unit)

A number of social welfare benefits and grants *are* available following a death... (plural verb; this is about the benefits and grants which are available individually)

But

If a couple *foster* a child, they are entitled to... (plural verb; the couple may be acting as a unit but we always refer to a couple as *they*, not *it*)

Where a couple are taxed at different rates... (plural verb; the couple are acting individually)

This is a tricky area. *The Economist Style Guide* notes “there is no firm rule” and that “it is best to go with the sense”.

### 9.3 *Compound nouns*

A compound noun is made up of two or more words. There are two types: open compound nouns and closed compound nouns. A closed compound noun is one word such as *workforce*. An open compound noun is a phrase which may or may not be joined by a hyphen. Examples of an open compound noun are *sister-in-law* and *attorney general*. Difficulties usually only arise with open compound nouns.

#### **Plurals**

Closed compound nouns generally form the plural in the usual way by adding *s* to the end of the complete word. For example: *watchdogs*. Compound words ending in *-ful* can vary. For example: use either *spoonfuls* or *spoonsful*; *spoonfuls* is probably more widespread.

To form the plural of open compound nouns, add *s* to the word that becomes plural. For example: use *fathers-in-law*, not *father-in-laws* and *doctors of philosophy*, not *doctor of philosophies*.

#### **Possessive**

With a singular compound noun, add *'s* at the end of the word or phrase to form the singular possessive. This applies whether the compound noun is closed (one word) or open (a phrase). For example: *policymaker's brief*, *son-in-law's rights*, *attorney general's recommendation*.

With a plural compound noun, add *s'* to the end of the word or phrase unless the result appears too awkward. With compound phrases (open compound nouns), it is better to use *of* instead of the apostrophe. For example: use *policymakers' decisions* and *decisions of the attorneys general*, not *attorneys general's decisions*.

### 9.4 *Dangling modifiers*

A dangling modifier is a phrase that usually occurs at the beginning of a sentence. It should describe (or modify) what follows in the sentence but causes confusion instead, because it is unclear to which word or phrase the dangling modifier is referring. For example:

Use: Being in breach of the law, a trader can be prosecuted by the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission.

Avoid: Being in breach of the law, the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission can prosecute a trader.

In the incorrect version, it appears that the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission is in breach of the law.

The general rule is that the word or phrase being modified should follow directly after the modifier.

### 9.5 *Pronouns*

A pronoun is a short word that is used in place of a noun or noun phrase. The noun or noun phrase is called the *antecedent* of the pronoun. Examples of pronouns are *it*, *this*, *that*, *those*, *these*, *him*, *her* and *them*.

Ensure that each pronoun has a true antecedent. For example:

Use: Figures show that, when penalty points were introduced, drivers became more careful.

Avoid: Figures show that, when penalty points were introduced, they became more careful.

In the incorrect version, the pronoun *they* has no true antecedent.

Ensure that there is no ambiguity about the antecedent. For example:

Use: Mr Jones told Mr Smith that Mr Smith was to be reported for bullying.

Use: Mr Jones told Mr Smith that he (Mr Jones) was to be reported for bullying.

Avoid: Mr Jones told Mr Smith that he was to be reported for bullying.

In the incorrect version, it is not clear whether the antecedent of the pronoun *he* refers to *Mr Jones* or *Mr Smith*.

## 9.6 Words that can cause problems

### **Affect and effect**

*Affect* means *change* or *influence*; it usually occurs as a verb. *Effect* means *result* or *cause*; it usually occurs as a noun. For example: He tried to *affect* the jury's decision. The only *effect* was that he was put in jail.

### **Alternate and alternative**

*Alternate* indicates *in turn* or *every other*. It does not imply choice. For example: In a job-sharing agreement, you and your co-worker may arrange to work *alternate* weeks.

*Alternative* means *choosing between two options*. Increasingly, it has come to mean *other*. For example: People who cannot attend their local polling station can make an *alternative* voting arrangement.

### **Among and between**

*Between* indicates an equal relationship. It can refer to two or more entities. For example: The treaty was negotiated *between* all the European governments.

*Among* suggests a more collective and vague arrangement within a group. For example: There is disagreement *among* committee members...

Do not use *amongst*.

### **Amount and number**

Use *amount* for quantities such as *money* and *food*. Use *number* for groups of individuals or items which can be counted separately such as *people*, *things* and *countries*.

### **As, because and since**

Use *as* or *because* to introduce a reason. Note that it is not wrong to start a sentence with *because*. For example:

Many pensioners do not have to pay tax because their income is too low.

As adoption is a complex legal process, it is helpful to be aware of the law.

Because adoption is a complex legal process, it is helpful to be aware of the law.

Use *as* to introduce something which occurs *at the same time*. For example: *As* the examination dates draw near, you may begin to feel anxious.

Use *since* to mean *from that time*. For example: *Since* 3 April 2015, it has been illegal to...

Using *since* instead of *because* can result in ambiguity. For example:

Clear: It has been illegal to smoke in the workplace since March 2004.

Ambiguous: There is a ban on smoking in the workplace since it is bad for your health.

See also *From and since* below.

### **Average**

Use *average* in a mathematical sense. Do not use it as a stereotype to describe people. For example:

Use: The average age at which people get married has risen significantly.

Use: On average, families go on holiday twice a year.

Avoid: The average family goes on holiday twice a year.

### **Biannual and biennial**

A *biannual* event takes place *twice a year*. A *biennial* event takes place every *two years*.

These terms can cause confusion. For clarity, use *twice a year* or *every two years*.

### **Both**

Avoid statements such as *this applies to both men and women*. This suggests there were only two men. Usually, it is not necessary to use *both* in these situations.

### **Complement, compliment, complimentary**

To *complement* means to *complete* or fill up. To *compliment* means to *express admiration* or respect.

Complimentary means *free* as in a *complimentary* copy.

### **Comprise and comprised of**

Do not use these terms. Use plain English terms instead.

Use *contain* or *include* instead of to *comprise*. For example:

Use: The form contains three parts.

Avoid: The form comprises three parts.

Use *consist of*, or *made up of*, or *composed of* instead of *comprised of*. For example:

Use: Seanad Éireann is made up of 60 members.

Avoid: Seanad Éireann is comprised of 60 members.

### **Continually and continuously**

*Continually* means *happening frequently* and *repeatedly* but not without a break. For example: He was dismissed for *continually* being late.

*Continuously* means without a break. For example: You must have been working *continuously* for the same employer for at least one year.

### **Dependant and dependent**

A *dependant* is a person. *Dependent* can be an adjective or part of a verb. For example:

Children are dependants of their parents.

If you care for a dependent relative, you may qualify for the Dependent Relative Tax Credit.

### ***From and since with dates***

Use *from* to indicate a future event or one which is now completed. Use *since* to indicate an event which has already started and is continuing. For example:

Use: From 2012 to 2015 your entitlement to One-Parent Family Payment depended on when you first claimed the payment and the age of your youngest child:

Use: From 2018 mortgage interest relief will be entirely abolished entirely.

Use: Since June 2014, every local authority has a chief executive...who is employed to manage their local authority.

Avoid: From June 2014, every local authority has a chief executive...who is employed to manage their local authority.

### ***If and whether***

Use *if* to describe a condition or possibility. For example:

If you send the notice by fax, you must keep the successful transmission report.

If you do not qualify for a medical card on income grounds, you may qualify for a GP Visit Card.

Use *whether* to introduce an indirect question. For example:

It has not yet been decided by an Irish court whether this refusal amounts to discrimination.

Use *whether* to introduce an alternative, implying *whether or not*. For example:

You will still be protected by general consumer legislation, whether you purchase the goods in Ireland or in another member state.

### ***Imply and infer***

*Imply* means *suggest*. *Infer* means *interpret* or *conclude*. Increasingly, these terms are used interchangeably.

### ***It's and its***

*Its* indicates ownership. *It's* is a contraction of *it is*.

### ***Licence and license***

Use *licence* for the noun. Use *license*, *licensed* and *licensing* for the verb or adjective. For example:

Every household must have a television licence.

Passenger ships that are licensed to carry more than 12 passengers must pass an annual inspection test.

Note: *off-licence*, *licensing laws*, *licensed premises*.

### ***Only***

Take care to place *only* in the correct position within a sentence. Otherwise, it can imply a meaning you did not intend. For example:

Use: Residents, staff and visitors may smoke only outside.

Avoid: Residents, staff and visitors may only smoke outside.

The second sentence suggests that the residents, staff and visitors can do nothing outside other than smoke.

### ***Precede and proceed***

*Precede* means come immediately before. For example: You must have practised farming in the *preceding* 10 years.

*Proceed* means begin or carry on. For example: You may *proceed* to the next stage.

### ***Principle and principal***

*Principle* is a noun; it can mean *rule, standard, theory* or *basis*. For example:

Bail is based on the principle that the accused is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

*Principal* can be a noun; as such, it means the *person in charge*. *Principal* can also be an adjective; as such, it means *main* or *chief*. For example:

School principals have reported a significant increase in bullying.

Farming must be your principal source of income.

### ***Rob and steal***

If something is *stolen*, it is taken away. If something is *robbed*, it remains but its contents are taken away. People, banks and houses are *robbed*; money and valuables are *stolen*.

### ***That is and for example***

Use *that is* to introduce a complete explanation. For example:

A new deed of title is drawn up each time ownership of a property changes – that is, when the property is sold, or transferred, or inherited (this explanation implies that there are no other ways in which ownership can change).

Use *for example* with explanations which are not necessarily complete. For example:

Physical recreation – for example, swimming, football or tennis (this means that there could be other forms of recreation)

Do not use *i.e.* instead of *that is*. Do not use *e.g.* instead of *for example*.

Do not use *and so on* after a phrase introduced by *for example* or *that is*.

### ***There is and there are***

Avoid overuse of these phrases, particularly at the start of a sentence. They are often unnecessary. For example:

Avoid: There are strict standards governing passport photographs.

Use: Strict standards govern passport photographs.

### ***Which and that***

*Which* informs; *that* defines. For example:

The committee reviewed the investment account, which is managed by the Minister for Finance.

The committee reviewed the investment account that is managed by the Minister for Finance.

In the first sentence, the management of the account by the Minister for Finance is extra information and is not essential to the meaning of the sentence.

In the second sentence, the investment is defined as being the one managed by the Minister for Finance; this information is essential to the meaning of the sentence.

### ***While and whereas***

Use *while* to discuss things which happen at the same time. For example:

You will be expected to stay at the accommodation centre while your application for a declaration as a refugee is being processed.

Use *whereas* to contrast or compare situations. For example:

Alternative care with a family is sometimes available for children with disabilities, whereas institutional care is usually provided for older people.

Do not use *while* as a synonym for *whereas*. This can cause ambiguity. For example:

Use: A separation agreement is reached through agreement between the parties, whereas a court grants a judicial separation or a divorce.

Avoid: A separation agreement is reached through agreement between the parties, while a court grants a judicial separation or a divorce.

The second sentence suggests that the court grants the separation or divorce at the same time as the parties reach a separation agreement.

### ***Who and whom***

Use *who* if you can rewrite the sentence using *he, she or they*. Use *whom* if you have to use *him, her or them* when you rewrite the sentence. For example:

The spouse who makes the payments is entitled to a tax deduction for the payments.

can be rewritten as

The spouse is entitled to a tax deduction if they make the payments.

However,

The spouse to whom maintenance is paid is taxed on the payments.

would have to be rewritten as

The spouse is taxed on maintenance payments made to them.

You might find this a useful memory aid: *who–they, whom–them*.

Use *whom* when referring to people. Do not use *whom* to replace *it or them* when referring, for example, to organisations or countries. Use *which* instead. For example:

Use: These are states with which Ireland has a bilateral agreement.

Avoid: These are states with whom Ireland has a bilateral agreement.

### ***Written, verbal and oral***

A *verbal* agreement is an agreement made by using words, either *written* or spoken. An *oral* agreement is one that is only spoken and not put in writing.

## Appendix 1: Glossary of terms

This glossary sets out preferred terms as at 1 July 2015.

Term	How to use it
<b>accession state(s)</b>	<b>Definition:</b> country with formal candidate status to the EU (for example, Serbia) <b>Use:</b> only in the context of the above
<b>annual leave</b>	<b>Definition:</b> entitlement to time off work set down in law <b>Use:</b> annual leave <b>Do not use:</b> holidays (except in the context of travel abroad)
<b>asylum seeker</b>	<b>Definition:</b> person recognised as an asylum seeker under the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees <b>Use:</b> for those seeking recognition as a refugee under the above Convention <b>Note:</b> do not confuse with people who have refugee status or people granted leave to remain.
<b>by-law(s)</b>	<b>Definition:</b> rule made by local authority to regulate own affairs <b>Use:</b> by-law <b>Do not use:</b> bye-law
<b>cent</b>	<b>Definition:</b> basic unit of euro, 1/100 value of euro <b>Use:</b> cent for singular and plural
<b>childcare</b>	<b>Definition:</b> caring for or supervising minor children <b>Use:</b> childcare (one word) <b>Do not use:</b> child care, except for referring to legislation as in the Child Care Act 1991
<b>childminder</b>	<b>Definition:</b> a person providing care for, or supervision of, minors <b>Use:</b> childminder (one word) <b>Do not use:</b> child minder
<b>child</b>	<b>Definition:</b> legally, a minor under 18 years of age <b>Use:</b> children for those aged under 16, young people for those aged 16 and 17
<b>Civil partner</b>	<b>Definition:</b> member of a same-sex couple who have registered their relationship as a civil partnership
<b>clawback</b>	<b>Definition:</b> the practice of taking back money (usually tax relief) <b>Use:</b> clawback (one word) for the noun, as in a Revenue clawback <b>Use:</b> claw back (two words) for the verb to claw back
<b>cohabiting</b>	<b>Definition:</b> living together in an intimate and committed relationship but not married or in a civil partnership <b>Use:</b> cohabit <b>Do not use:</b> co-habit

Term	How to use it
<b>court</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> official forum for adjudicating legal disputes</p> <p><b>Use:</b> court (lower case) for general references. Use Court (initial capital) for specific examples such as District Court, Circuit Court.</p>
<b>creche</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> service providing supervised childcare for limited periods during the day</p> <p><b>Use:</b> creche</p> <p><b>Never use:</b> crèche</p>
<b>Dáil Éireann</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> lower house of the Oireachtas</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Dáil Éireann for the first mention. Use the Dáil after this. Explain the term in English if you think it may be unfamiliar to some readers.</p>
<b>day care</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> childcare during the day by a non-parent or guardian, or daily social and rehabilitative services for older people or those with disabilities</p> <p><b>Use:</b> day care (two words)</p>
<b>dead</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> person who is not living</p> <p><b>Use:</b> deceased person, or the deceased</p> <p><b>Never use:</b> dead person</p>
<b>deaf</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> deaf, hard of hearing, hearing impaired (as appropriate)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> above term (lower case) as appropriate. Use upper case D for Deaf community, Deaf people.</p> <p><b>Never use:</b> deaf and dumb, mute</p>
<b>Department of Social Protection</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> government department responsible for administering social insurance and social assistance schemes</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Department of Social Protection (DSP) for the first reference in each section. Use DSP or the Department for repeated references within the section.</p>
<b>disability</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> a physical or intellectual impairment that may restrict ability</p> <p><b>Use:</b> disability, person with a disability, disabled people, people with disabilities</p> <p><b>Never use:</b> handicapped, the disabled</p>
<b>dole</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> welfare payment to unemployed people</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Jobseeker's Benefit, Jobseeker's Allowance, as appropriate</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> dole, Unemployment Benefit, Unemployment Assistance</p>
<b>education</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> The education system consists of primary education, post-primary education, third-level education and further education. Further education is education and training that takes place after post-primary education but is not part of the third-level system. See also primary, post-primary, third level.</p>
<b>elderly</b>	See older people.

Term	How to use it
<b>email</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> electronic mail</p> <p><b>Use:</b> email</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> e-mail, E-mail, EMAIL</p>
<b>employment permit</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> general term for General Employment Permits, Critical Skills Employment Permits and others.</p> <p><b>Use:</b> employment permit for the general reference. Use the actual permit name when referring to a specific type of permit.</p>
<b>foreign nationals</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> non-Irish nationals</p> <p><b>Use:</b> foreign nationals, EEA nationals, non-EEA nationals, migrant workers and so on, depending on the context</p> <p><b>Never use:</b> non-national</p>
<b>Garda, Gardaí</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> member(s) of An Garda Síochána</p> <p><b>Use:</b> An Garda Síochána for the official title, Gardaí for the collective group, Garda station. Use garda or gardaí in lists with other professions.</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> guard</p>
<b>Government</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> body of persons authorised to exercise power on behalf of the State</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Government for the current Irish Government. Use government for general references, government department, foreign governments.</p>
<b>health centre</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> health centres deliver a wide range of primary and community care services including the following: GP, social work, public health nursing, child health and home help.</p> <p><b>Use:</b> health centre</p> <p><b>Never use:</b> centre, hc, Health Centre, dispensary</p> <p>See also Local Health Office</p>
<b>Health Service Executive</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> statutory organisation that provides health and personal social services through a network of Local Health Offices and delivered through local health centres.</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Health Service Executive (HSE) for the first reference. Use HSE after this. Or, use Local Health Office where it is appropriate.</p> <p><b>Never use:</b> health board</p>
<b>holidays</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> leave, time off, a break, vacation. The term can also mark a national day such as a public holiday.</p> <p><b>Use:</b> only when referring to recreational time off or travel.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> do not confuse holiday with annual leave or public holiday.</p>
<b>ill, illness</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> condition impairing normal physical or mental function</p> <p><b>Use:</b> illness when referring to specific welfare benefits (for example Illness Benefit) and non-specific medical conditions. Use sick leave when referring to leave taken while ill.</p> <p><b>Never use:</b> illness leave, sick benefits.</p>

Term	How to use it
<b>immigrants</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> people who migrate to settle in another state</p> <p><b>Use:</b> foreign nationals, migrant workers, EEA nationals, dependants of EEA nationals, as appropriate.</p>
<b>intellectual disability</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> The World Health Organization defines intellectual disability as “a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information and to learn and apply new skills (impaired intelligence). This results in a reduced ability to cope independently (impaired social functioning), and begins before adulthood, with a lasting effect on development.”</p> <p><b>Use:</b> intellectual disability in general references. Where possible, refer to the specific disability. Use special educational needs when referring to education.</p> <p><b>Never use:</b> handicapped, mentally handicapped</p> <p>See also learning difficulty, special educational needs.</p>
<b>Intreo</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> Department of Social Protection service providing a single point of contact for all employment and income supports.</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Intreo centre</p> <p>See also social welfare local office</p>
<b>jobseeker</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> unemployed person available for work</p>
<b>judge</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> appointed official who presides before a court</p> <p><b>Use:</b> judge (lower case) unless inserting the term before someone’s name, for example, Judge Smith</p>
<b>learning difficulty</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> “a condition or malfunction which results in a person learning differently from someone without that condition or malfunction” (Section 2, Equal Status Act 2000)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> the particular difficulty where possible (for example, children with dyslexia, people with autism). Prefer learning difficulty to learning disability.</p> <p><b>Never use:</b> handicap, mentally handicapped</p> <p>See also intellectual disability, learning disability.</p>
<b>learning disability</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> condition or disorder that causes difficulty with skills such as comprehension, cognisance, reading and writing. This term describes the broad range of intellectual disabilities – from mild to considerable, enduring disabilities.</p> <p><b>Use:</b> prefer learning difficulty when referring to the conditions above. For other general references, prefer intellectual disability to learning disability. Use special educational needs when referring to the educational or learning requirements.</p> <p><b>Never use:</b> handicapped, mentally handicapped</p> <p>See also intellectual disability, learning difficulty, special educational needs.</p>

Term	How to use it
<b>leave to remain</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> discretionary permission to remain in Ireland (usually on humanitarian grounds) for those who fail the requirements for refugee status or withdraw from the asylum process</p> <p><b>Use:</b> leave to remain</p> <p><b>Note:</b> do not confuse with refugees or asylum seekers.</p>
<b>local authority</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> administrative branch of local government. The term applies to county and city councils.</p> <p><b>Use:</b> local authority as in local authority housing</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> county council, CoCo</p>
<b>Local Health Office</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> one of the national network of Health Service Executive (HSE) Local Health Offices</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Local Health Office when referring to any of the Local Health Offices. Use Health Service Executive (HSE) when referring to the national organisation.</p> <p><b>Never use:</b> health board</p> <p><b>Note:</b> do not confuse with health centre.</p>
<b>lo-call</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> telephone calls at local rates, irrespective of location</p> <p><b>Use:</b> lo-call for general references, Lo-call (upper case L) before a specific number</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> Lo call, Locall, LoCall</p>
<b>minister</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> politician at the head of a government department</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Minister (initial capital) for members of the current Irish Government. Otherwise, use lower case.</p>
<b>nationality</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> legal relationship between a person and state</p> <p><b>Use:</b> initial capital for specific nationalities and ethnic groups (Irish, English, French, and so on)</p>
<b>Oireachtas</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> includes the President and both houses of the Oireachtas (Dáil and Seanad)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> the Oireachtas when referring to the above collectively. Explain the term in English if is not clear from the context.</p>
<b>older people</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> generally refers to those aged over 60, senior citizens, those approaching retirement age</p> <p><b>Use:</b> older people</p> <p><b>Never use:</b> elderly, the elderly, elderly people, old people</p>
<b>ombudsman</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> statutory office and/or person who investigates complaints</p> <p><b>Use:</b> ombudsman and ombudsmen for general references. Use Ombudsman (initial capital) if referring to a specific person and the current holder of the title.</p> <p><b>Never use:</b> ombudsperson or ombudswoman</p>

Term	How to use it
<b>one-parent family</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> a lone parent with one or more dependent children resident or not resident in the household</p> <p><b>Use:</b> One-Parent Family Payment for the social welfare benefit. Otherwise, avoid this phrase. Prefer lone parents, parenting alone or solo parenting.</p>
<b>parental leave</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> statutory unpaid leave for either parent</p> <p><b>Use:</b> parental leave</p>
<b>paternity leave</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> non-statutory unpaid leave from employment for male employees following the birth of their child</p> <p><b>Use:</b> paternal leave, paternity leave</p>
<b>pay</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> wage or money given in exchange for goods and services</p> <p><b>Use:</b> pay, in preference to salary or wage</p>
<b>post-primary</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> general term for second-level (public or private) education directly following primary school.</p> <p><b>Use:</b> post-primary education, post-primary level (note the hyphen)</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> post-primary school; use secondary school or the other relevant name. Do not use 2<sup>nd</sup> level.</p> <p>See also education.</p>
<b>pre-school</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> nursery school for children aged under 6 who are not attending school</p> <p><b>Use:</b> pre-school</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> preschool, pre school</p>
<b>primary</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> general term for first-level (public or private) education</p> <p><b>Use:</b> primary, as in primary school</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> first level, 1<sup>st</sup> level</p>
<b>prison</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> a secure place where offenders are held</p> <p><b>Use:</b> prison</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> jail or gaol</p>
<b>pupil</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> schoolchild below 13 years of age</p> <p><b>Use:</b> pupil for those in primary school, student for those in post-primary and third-level institutions</p>
<b>refugee</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> this may be a Convention refugee, defined under the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees and the Refugee Act 1966 (as amended). Alternatively, the term may refer to a Programme refugee invited to Ireland following a Government decision arising from a UN humanitarian request.</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Programme refugees or Convention refugees</p> <p><b>Note:</b> do not confuse with asylum seekers or people granted leave to remain.</p>

Term	How to use it
<b>Revenue Commissioners</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> statutory body that collects taxes on behalf of the Government</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Office of the Revenue Commissioners for the official title. Use Revenue for the collective group.</p>
<b>salary</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> amount an employer pays an employee for work completed, usually on a monthly basis</p> <p><b>Use:</b> pay in preference to salary or wages</p>
<b>schools</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> educational institutions, normally primary or secondary</p> <p><b>Use:</b> primary or secondary school as appropriate</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> post-primary school when referring to a second-level institution</p>
<b>self-employed</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> a person who is working for themselves</p> <p><b>Use:</b> self-employed</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> self employed</p>
<b>sick</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> being unwell, affected by a disease or medical condition</p> <p><b>Use:</b> sick leave, when describing such time off work. Use ill or illness when describing social welfare benefits such as Illness Benefit.</p> <p><b>Never use:</b> sick benefits, illness leave</p>
<b>social assistance payment</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> the general term for the range of social welfare payments available to those without sufficient PRSI contributions, for example, Jobseeker's Allowance.</p> <p><b>Use:</b> social assistance payment for general references (for example, as a table heading) or as an explanation. Otherwise, use the specific name of the payment.</p>
<b>social insurance payment</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> the general term for the range of social welfare benefit payments available to those with sufficient PRSI contributions, for example, Jobseeker's Benefit.</p> <p><b>Use:</b> social insurance payment for general references (for example, as a table heading) or as an explanation. Otherwise, use the specific name of the relevant payment.</p>
<b>social security payments</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> the general term for payments based on social insurance contributions made in another state.</p> <p><b>Use:</b> social security payments, but explain what this means.</p>
<b>social welfare local offices</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> the national network of social welfare offices</p> <p><b>Use:</b> for local offices of the Department of Social Protection</p> <p>See also <i>Intreo</i></p>
<b>social welfare payment</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> the general term covering all payments from the Department of Social Protection</p> <p><b>Use:</b> social welfare payment only if speaking generally. Otherwise, name the relevant payment.</p>

Term	How to use it
<b>SOLAS</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> further education and training authority responsible for funding, planning and co-ordinating training and further education programmes.</p> <p><b>Use:</b> SOLAS</p> <p><b>Never use:</b> FÁS</p>
<b>special educational needs</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> specific facilities that a person with an intellectual disability may need in order to avail of services and entitlements. See the note below.</p> <p><b>Use:</b> special educational needs in preference to special needs (note educational, not education)</p> <p><b>Never use:</b> handicapped, or mentally handicapped</p> <p><b>Note:</b> only use this term in the context of describing the rights and entitlements of those with intellectual disability under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 and the specific services provided by Department of Education and Skills covered by that Act.</p> <p>See also intellectual disability</p>
<b>state agency</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> organisation that provides a public service but is usually independent and positioned outside the hierarchy of any government department</p> <p><b>Use:</b> State agency when referring to an Irish State agency</p>
<b>statutory agency</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> state agency with a legislative basis</p> <p><b>Use:</b> state agency. However, statutory agency may be used if you need to emphasise the legislative basis of an organisation. Use State agency when referring to an Irish State agency</p>
<b>student</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> person attending post-primary or third-level institution</p> <p><b>Use:</b> student for secondary and third level, pupil for someone in primary school</p>
<b>suicide</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> to purposefully take own life</p> <p><b>Use:</b> died by suicide</p> <p><b>Never use:</b> committed suicide, killed themselves</p>
<b>surviving civil partner</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> civil partner of a deceased person</p> <p><b>Use:</b> surviving civil partner when referring to social welfare payments</p>
<b>Taoiseach</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> head of the Irish Government</p> <p><b>Use:</b> the Taoiseach, in general references to the person currently in this position. Use An Taoiseach before the person's name.</p> <p><b>Use:</b> taoiseach (lower case) when making a general reference to the role or referring to people who are no longer in the position (for example, a former taoiseach).</p>

Term	How to use it
<b>third level</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> education usually provided by universities and institutes of technology or equivalent bodies</p> <p><b>Use:</b> third-level in preference to higher-level, as in third-level institution or third-level education (note the hyphen before a noun)</p> <p><b>Never use:</b> 3rd level</p>
<b>Travellers</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> members of the Traveller community</p> <p><b>Use:</b> upper case T, as in Traveller community, Traveller children</p>
<b>widow or widower</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> spouse of a deceased person</p> <p><b>Use:</b> widowed person for the general reference, or widow or widower as appropriate</p>
<b>young people</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> youths aged between 16 and 18 years</p> <p><b>Use:</b> young people for 16 and 17 year olds, children for under 16s</p>

## Appendix 4: Commonly used abbreviations

This appendix sets out preferred terms as at 1 July 2015.

See 1.12 *Abbreviations* for comprehensive guidelines on abbreviations, acronyms and contractions.

Abbreviation	How to use it
<b>AAI</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Adoption Authority of Ireland <b>Use:</b> Adoption Authority of Ireland (AAI) for the first reference in each section. Use AAI after this if the meaning is clear.
<b>AG</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Office of the Attorney General <b>Use:</b> Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General <b>Do not use:</b> AG, the Attorney
<b>AHEAD</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Association for Higher Education Access and Disability <b>Use:</b> AHEAD
<b>AI</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Approved Intermediary <b>Use:</b> Approved Intermediary (AI) for the first reference in each section. Use AI for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear.
<b>am, pm</b>	<b>Full term:</b> ante meridiem, post meridiem (before noon, after noon) <b>Use:</b> am or pm as in 5am or 11.30pm (lower case, no full stops, no space after the digits)
<b>APR</b>	<b>Full term:</b> annual percentage rate <b>Use:</b> annual percentage rate (APR) for the first reference. Use APR after this.
<b>ASBO</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Anti-Social Behaviour Order <b>Use:</b> ASBO (Anti-Social Behaviour Order) for the first reference. Use ASBO after this.
<b>BAI</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Broadcasting Authority of Ireland <b>Use:</b> Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) for the first reference in each section. Use BAI after this if the meaning is clear.
<b>BER</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Building Energy Rating <b>Use:</b> Building Energy Rating (BER) for the first reference in each section. Use BER after this if the meaning is clear.
<b>BPFI</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Banking and Payments Federation of Ireland <b>Use:</b> Banking and Payments Federation of Ireland (BPFI) for the first reference in each section. Use BPFI after this if the meaning is clear.
<b>BTEA</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Back to Education Allowance (social welfare payment) <b>Use:</b> Back to Education Allowance (BTEA) for the first reference in each section. Use BTEA for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear.

Abbreviation	How to use it
<b>BTWEA</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (social welfare payment)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA) for the first reference in each section. Use BTWEA for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>BTWFD</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Back to Work Family Dividend</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Back to Work Family Dividend (BTWFD) for the first reference in each section. Use BTWFD after this if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>CAO</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Central Applications Office</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Central Applications Office (CAO) for the first reference. Use CAO after this.</p>
<b>CAT</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Capital Acquisitions Tax</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Capital Acquisitions Tax (CAT) for the first reference in each section. Use CAT for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>CCCs</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> City and County Childcare Committees</p> <p><b>Use:</b> City and County Childcare Committees (CCCs) for the first reference in each section. Use CCCs for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear</p>
<b>CCMA</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Code of Conduct on Mortgage Arrears</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Code of Conduct on Mortgage Arrears (CCMA) for the first reference in each section. Use CCMA for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear</p>
<b>CCPC</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (formerly National Consumer Agency)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC) for the first reference. Prefer the full name as this is a relatively new organisation.</p>
<b>CE</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Community Employment (an employment scheme)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Community Employment Scheme (CE) for the first reference in each section. Use CE for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>CER</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Commission for Energy Regulation</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Commission for Energy Regulation (CER) for the first reference in each section. Use CER for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>CFA</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Child and Family Agency (called Tusla)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Child and Family Agency (CFA) for the first reference in each section. Use CFA for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>CGT</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Capital Gains Tax</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Capital Gains Tax (CGT) for the first reference in each section. Use CGT for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear.</p>

Abbreviation	How to use it
<b>CIB</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Citizens Information Board</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Citizens Information Board (CIB) for the first reference. Use CIB for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear.</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> CI Board, the Board, Board</p> <p>See also <i>Appendix 3</i>.</p>
<b>CIC</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Citizens Information Centre</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Citizens Information Centre (CIC) for the first reference in each section. Use CIC for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear.</p> <p>See also <i>Appendix 3</i>.</p>
<b>CIPS</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Citizens Information Phone Service</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) for the first reference in each section. Use CIPS for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear.</p> <p>See also <i>Appendix 3</i>.</p>
<b>CIS</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Citizens Information Service</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Citizens Information Service (CIS) for the first reference in each section. Use CIS for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear.</p> <p>See also <i>Appendix 3</i>.</p>
<b>cm</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> centimetre</p> <p><b>Use:</b> centimetre(s) for occasional occurrences. Use cm as in 25cm for repeated sets of measurements, such as in tables and lists.</p>
<b>ComReg</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Commission for Communications Regulation</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) for the first reference. Use ComReg after this.</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> COMREG, Comreg</p>
<b>CPI</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Consumer Price Index</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the first reference in each section. Use CPI for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>CRO</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Companies Registration Office</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Companies Registration Office (CRO) for the first reference in each section. Use CRO for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>CTA</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Common Travel Area (the legal term for the travel area between Ireland and the UK)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Common Travel Area (CTA) for the first reference in each section. Use CTA for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear.</p>

Abbreviation	How to use it
<b>DA</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Disability Allowance (a social welfare payment)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Disability Allowance is preferred. Limit references to DA to avoid confusion with other allowances. Introduce DA alongside the full term before you use it.</p>
<b>DAHG</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht</p> <p><b>Use:</b> the full term above, where possible. Alternatively, use the Department sparingly and only if it is clear which department you mean.</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> DAHG</p>
<b>DARE</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) for the first reference. Use DARE after this.</p>
<b>DCA</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Domiciliary Care Allowance</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Domiciliary Care Allowance is preferred. Limit references to DCA to avoid confusion with other allowances. Introduce DCA alongside the full term before you use it.</p>
<b>DCENR</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources</p> <p><b>Use:</b> the full term above, where possible. Alternatively, use the Department sparingly and only if it is clear which department you mean.</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> DCENR</p>
<b>DCYA</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Department of Children and Youth Affairs</p> <p><b>Use:</b> the full term above, where possible. Alternatively, use the Department sparingly and only if it is clear which department you mean.</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> DCYA</p>
<b>DECLG</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government</p> <p><b>Use:</b> the full term above, where possible. Alternatively, use the Department sparingly and only if it is clear which department you mean.</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> Environment, or DECLG</p>
<b>DES</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Department of Education and Skills</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Department of Education and Skills (DES) for the first reference in each section. Use DES after this if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>DFAT</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade</p> <p><b>Use:</b> the full term above, where possible. Alternatively, use the Department sparingly and only if it is clear which department you mean.</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> DFA, Foreign Affairs</p>

Abbreviation	How to use it
<b>DFI</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Disability Federation of Ireland</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) for the first reference in each section. Use DFI for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>DIRT</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Deposit Interest Retention Tax</p> <p><b>Use:</b> DIRT (Deposit Interest Retention Tax) for the first reference. Use DIRT after this.</p>
<b>DJEI</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI) for the first reference in each section. Use DJEI after this if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>DJE</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Department of Justice and Equality</p> <p><b>Use:</b> the full term above, or Department of Justice. Alternatively, use the Department sparingly and only if it is clear which department you mean.</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> Justice or DJE</p>
<b>DOH</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Department of Health</p> <p><b>Use:</b> the Department of Health. Alternatively, use the Department sparingly and only if it is clear which department you mean.</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> DOH, DoH or Health</p>
<b>DPS</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Drugs Payment Scheme</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Drugs Payment Scheme when describing the scheme. Use DPS Card when discussing the Card but only after you have given the full term first alongside the abbreviation.</p>
<b>DRN</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Debt Relief Notice</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Debt Relief Notice (DRN) for the first reference in each section. Use DRN after this if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>DSA</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Debt Settlement Arrangement</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Debt Settlement Arrangement (DSA) for the first reference in each section. Use DSA after this if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>DSP</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Department of Social Protection</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Department of Social Protection (DSP) for the first reference in each section. Limit the use of DSP for repeated references within the section. Use Department occasionally, but only if this does not cause ambiguity.</p>
<b>DTTS</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Driver Theory Testing Service</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Driver Theory Testing Service is preferred. Limit the use of DTTS and only use this after you have introduced it alongside the full term.</p>
<b>e or e-</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> electronic (sometimes hyphenated, sometimes not)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> e-banking, e-business, e-bulletin, e-commerce, e-voting</p> <p><b>Use:</b> eGovernment, email</p>

Abbreviation	How to use it
<b>ECJ</b>	<b>Full term:</b> European Court of Justice <b>Use:</b> European Court of Justice (ECJ) for the first reference in each section. Use ECJ for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear
<b>EEA</b>	<b>Full term:</b> European Economic Area <b>Use:</b> European Economic Area (EEA) for the first reference in each section. Use EEA for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear.
<b>EFL</b>	<b>Full term:</b> English as a Foreign Language <b>Use:</b> EFL (English as a Foreign Language) for the first reference. Use EFL after this. See also <i>TEFL</i>
<b>EHIC</b>	<b>Full term:</b> European Health Insurance Card <b>Use:</b> European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) for the first reference in each section. Use EHIC for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear.
<b>EPA</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Environmental Protection Agency <b>Use:</b> Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for the first reference. Use EPA after this.
<b>ERO</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Employment Regulation Order <b>Use:</b> Employment Regulation Order (ERO) for the first reference. Use ERO after this.
<b>ESF</b>	<b>Full term:</b> European Social Fund <b>Use:</b> European Social Fund (ESF) for the first reference in each section. Use ESF for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear.
<b>ETB</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Education and Training Board (formerly VEC) <b>Use:</b> Education and Training Board (ETB) for the first reference in each section. Use ETB for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear.
<b>EU</b>	<b>Full term:</b> European Union <b>Use:</b> EU (European Union) for the first reference. Use EU after this.
<b>EURES</b>	<b>Full term:</b> European Employment Services <b>Use:</b> EURES (European Employment Services) for the first reference. Use EURES after this.
<b>FET</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Further Education and Training <b>Use:</b> Further Education and Training (FET) for the first reference in each section. Use FET after this if the meaning is clear.
<b>FIS</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Family Income Supplement <b>Use:</b> Family Income Supplement (FIS) for the first reference in each section. Use FIS after this if the meaning is clear.

Abbreviation	How to use it
<b>FLAC</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> FLAC (Free Legal Advice Centres)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> FLAC (Free Legal Advice Centres) for the first reference. Use FLAC after this</p>
<b>FOI</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Freedom of Information</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Freedom of Information (FOI) for the first reference. Use FOI after this.</p>
<b>FSAI</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Food Safety Authority of Ireland</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) for the first reference. Use FSAI after this.</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> Food Safety</p> <p><b>Note:</b> do not confuse with Safefood, a separate organisation.</p>
<b>GNIB</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Garda National Immigration Bureau</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) for the first reference. Use GNIB after this.</p>
<b>Gov</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Government</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Government (initial capital) for the current Irish Government. Use government (lower case) for general references, government department, foreign and past governments.</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> Govt, gov, GOV</p>
<b>GP</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> general practitioner</p> <p><b>Use:</b> GP (family doctor) for the first reference. Use GP after this.</p>
<b>GRO</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> General Register Office</p> <p><b>Use:</b> General Register Office (GRO) for the first reference. Prefer the full term above.</p>
<b>HAP</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Housing Assistance Payment</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) for the first reference in each section. Use HAP after this if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>HEA</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Higher Education Authority</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Higher Education Authority (HEA) for the first reference in each section. Use HEA for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>HEAR</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Higher Education Access Route (HEAR)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) for the first reference. Use HEAR after this.</p>
<b>HEI</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Higher Education Institution (post-secondary education at colleges, universities, professional or technical schools)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Higher Education Institution (HEI) for the first reference in each section. Use HEI for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>HIA</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Health Insurance Authority</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Health Insurance Authority (HIA) for the first reference. Use HIA for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear.</p>

Abbreviation	How to use it
<b>HIQA</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Health Information and Quality Authority</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) for the first reference. Prefer the full name as this is a relatively new organisation.</p>
<b>HPRA</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Health Products Regulatory Authority (formerly Irish Medicines Board)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) for the first reference. Prefer the full name as this is a relatively new organisation.</p>
<b>HPSC</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Health Promotion Surveillance Centre</p> <p><b>Use:</b> the full term above</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> HPSC, NDSC or National Disease Surveillance Centre</p>
<b>HSE</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Health Service Executive (HSE)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Health Service Executive (HSE) for the first reference. Use HSE after this.</p> <p><b>Never use:</b> health board</p>
<b>IBEC</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Irish Business and Employers Confederation</p> <p><b>Use:</b> IBEC. This is widely understood but give the full term with the first mention if you think the information would be useful.</p>
<b>IBTS</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Irish Blood Transfusion Service</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Irish Blood Transfusion Service (IBTS) for the first reference. Use IBTS after this.</p>
<b>ICT</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> information communications technology</p> <p><b>Use:</b> for education-related documents only. Use ICT (information communications technology) for the first reference and ICT after this. Otherwise, use IT (information technology).</p>
<b>ICTU</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Irish Congress of Trade Unions</p> <p><b>Use:</b> ICTU (Irish Congress of Trade Unions) for the first reference. Use ICTU after this.</p>
<b>IHREC</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (formerly Irish Human Rights Commission, Equality Authority)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) for the first reference. Prefer the full name as this is a relatively new organisation.</p>
<b>IMF</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> International Monetary Fund</p> <p><b>Use:</b> International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the first reference. Use IMF after this.</p>
<b>IMPACT</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Irish Municipal Public and Civil Trade Union</p> <p><b>Use:</b> IMPACT. This is widely understood, but give the full term if you think the information would be useful.</p>
<b>INIS</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) for the first reference in each section. Use INIS for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear.</p>

Abbreviation	How to use it
<b>INOUE</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed <b>Use:</b> INOU (Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed) for the first reference. Use INOU after this.
<b>IQA</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Increase for Qualified Adult <b>Use:</b> Increase for Qualified Adult (IQA) for the first reference in each section. Use IQA after this if the meaning is clear.
<b>IQC</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Increase for Qualified Child <b>Use:</b> Increase for Qualified Child (IQC) for the first reference in each section. Use IQC after this if the meaning is clear.
<b>IRIS</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Irish Remote Interpreting Service <b>Use:</b> Irish Remote Interpreting Service (IRIS) for the first reference in each section. Use IRIS after this if the meaning is clear.
<b>ISI</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Insolvency Service of Ireland <b>Use:</b> Insolvency Service of Ireland (ISI) for the first reference in each section. Use ISI after this if the meaning is clear.
<b>ISME</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association <b>Use:</b> Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association (ISME) for the first reference in each section. Use ISME after this if the meaning is clear.
<b>ISPCA</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals <b>Use:</b> ISPCA (Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) for the first reference. Use ISPCA after this.
<b>ISPCC</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children <b>Use:</b> ISPCC (Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) for the first reference. Use ISPCC after this.
<b>IT</b>	<b>Full term:</b> information technology <b>Use:</b> IT (information technology) for the first reference. Use IT after this unless the term could be misunderstood.
<b>IT</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Institute of Technology <b>Use:</b> Institute of Technology (IT) for the first reference. Use IT after this unless the term could be misunderstood.
<b>JA</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Jobseeker's Allowance <b>Use:</b> Jobseeker's Allowance (JA) for the first reference. Use JA after this if the meaning is clear.
<b>JB</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Jobseeker's Benefit <b>Use:</b> Jobseeker's Benefit (JB) for the first reference. Use JB after this if the meaning is clear.
<b>JCSA</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Junior Cycle Student Award <b>Use:</b> Junior Cycle Student Award (JCSA) for the first reference. Prefer the full name as this is a new term.

Abbreviation	How to use it
<b>JLC</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Joint Labour Committee</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Joint Labour Committee (JLC) for the first reference. Use JLC if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>JLO</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Juvenile Liaison Officer</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Juvenile Liaison Officer (JLO) for the first reference. Use JLO for repeat references within the same section if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>JST</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Jobseeker's Allowance transitional arrangement</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Jobseeker's Allowance transitional arrangement (JST) for the first reference. Use JST for repeat references within the same section if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>kg</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> kilogramme</p> <p><b>Use:</b> kilogramme for occasional occurrences. Use kg as in 11kg (lower case, no full stops, no spaces) for repeated sets of measurements, such as in tables and lists.</p>
<b>km and km/h</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> kilometres and kilometres per hour</p> <p><b>Use:</b> the full term for occasional occurrences. Use km or km/h as in 80km/h (lower case, no full stops, no spaces) for repeated sets of measurements, such as in tables and lists.</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> kph</p>
<b>LEADER</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale (a grant programme funded by the EU supporting sustainable economic and community development in rural areas)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> LEADER</p>
<b>LEO</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Local Enterprise Office</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Local Enterprise Office (LEO) for the first reference. Use LEO after this if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>LES</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Local Employment Service</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Local Employment Service (LES) for the first reference. Use LES after this if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>LHO</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Local Health Office</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Local Health Office (LHO) for the first reference. Use LHO after this if the meaning is clear.</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> health office. Do not confuse with health centre.</p>
<b>LPT</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Local Property Tax</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Local Property Tax (LPT) for the first reference. Use LPT after this if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>LRC</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Law Reform Commission</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Law Reform Commission. You can also use LRC (for example, in phrases such as the LRC Report) but only after you have used Law Reform Commission (LRC).</p>

Abbreviation	How to use it
<b>MABS</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Money Advice and Budgeting Service <b>Use:</b> MABS (Money Advice and Budgeting Service) for the first reference. Use MABS after this.
<b>MARP</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process <b>Use:</b> Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process (MARP) for the first reference. Use MARP for repeat references in the section if the meaning is clear.
<b>MEP</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Member of the European Parliament <b>Use:</b> MEP (Member of the European Parliament) for the first reference. Use MEP after this.
<b>mm</b>	<b>Full term:</b> millimetres <b>Use:</b> millimetres for occasional occurrences. Use mm as in 35mm (lower case, no full stops, no spaces) for repeated sets of measurements, such as in tables and lists.
<b>NALA</b>	<b>Full term:</b> National Adult Literacy Agency <b>Use:</b> National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) for the first reference. Use NALA after this.
<b>NAMA</b>	<b>Full term:</b> National Asset Management Agency <b>Use:</b> National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) for the first reference. Use NAMA after this.
<b>NAS</b>	<b>Full term:</b> National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities <b>Use:</b> National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities (NAS) for the first reference. Use NAS for repeat references in the section if the meaning is clear.
<b>NCBI</b>	<b>Full term:</b> National Council for the Blind of Ireland <b>Use:</b> National Council for the Blind of Ireland (NCBI) for the first reference in each section. Use NCBI for repeat references in the section if the meaning is clear.
<b>NCSE</b>	<b>Full term:</b> National Council for Special Education <b>Use:</b> National Council for Special Education (NCSE) for the first reference in each section. Use NCSE for repeat references in the section if the meaning is clear.
<b>NCT</b>	<b>Full term:</b> National Car Test <b>Use:</b> NCT (National Car Test) for the first reference. Use NCT after this.
<b>NDA</b>	<b>Full term:</b> National Disability Authority <b>Use:</b> NDA (National Disability Authority) for the first reference. Use NDA after this.
<b>NDLS</b>	<b>Full term:</b> National Driver Licence Service <b>Use:</b> National Driver Licence Service (NDLS) for the first reference. Use NDLS for repeat references in the section if the meaning is clear.

Abbreviation	How to use it
<b>NEPS</b>	<b>Full term:</b> National Educational Psychological Service <b>Use:</b> National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) for the first reference. Use NEPS after this.
<b>NMW</b>	<b>Full term:</b> National Minimum Wage <b>Use:</b> National Minimum Wage, NMW or minimum wage (lower case for this)
<b>NPCP</b>	<b>Full term:</b> National Parents Council (Primary) <b>Use:</b> National Parents Council (Primary) – NPCP, for the first reference. Use NPCP after this.
<b>NPCPP</b>	<b>Full term:</b> National Parents Council (Post-Primary) <b>Use:</b> National Parents Council (Post-Primary) – NPCPP, for the first reference. Use NPCPP after this.
<b>NRA</b>	<b>Full term:</b> National Roads Authority <b>Use:</b> National Roads Authority (NRA). If using NRA, ensure it is clear what this abbreviation represents.
<b>NTPF</b>	<b>Full term:</b> National Treatment Purchase Fund <b>Use:</b> National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) for the first reference. Use NTPF after this if the meaning is clear.
<b>NUI</b>	<b>Full term:</b> National University of Ireland <b>Use:</b> NUI, but explain the term if it is used alone. There is no need to explain the term if it is used as part of an official title – NUI Galway.
<b>ODCE</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement <b>Use:</b> prefer the full term above. Use ODCE sparingly and only after you have introduced it alongside the full term.
<b>OFPP</b>	<b>Full term:</b> One-Parent Family Payment <b>Use:</b> One-Parent Family Payment (OFPP) for the first reference in each section. Use OFPP in the same section if the meaning is clear.
<b>OPW</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Office of Public Works <b>Use:</b> Office of Public Works (OPW) for the first reference. Use OPW after this if the meaning is clear.
<b>ORAC</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Office of the Refugee Applications Commission <b>Use:</b> Office of the Refugee Applications Commission (ORAC) for the first reference in each section. Use OFPP in the same section if the meaning is clear.
<b>OT</b>	<b>Full term:</b> occupational therapist <b>Use:</b> occupational therapist (lower case) Don't use: O/T, OT
<b>PAYE</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Pay As You Earn <b>Use:</b> PAYE (Pay As You Earn) for the first reference. Use PAYE after this.

Abbreviation	How to use it
<b>PCRS</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Primary Care Reimbursement Service <b>Use:</b> Primary Care Reimbursement Service (PCRS) for the first reference in each section. Use PCRS in the same section if the meaning is clear.
<b>PHN</b>	<b>Full term:</b> public health nurse <b>Use:</b> public health nurse (lower case) <b>Do not use:</b> PHN
<b>PIA</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Personal Insolvency Arrangement <b>Use:</b> Personal Insolvency Arrangement (PIA) for the first reference in each section. Use PIA in the same section if the meaning is clear.
<b>PIP</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Personal Insolvency Practitioner <b>Use:</b> Personal Insolvency Practitioner (PIP) for the first reference in each section. Use PIP in the same section if the meaning is clear.
<b>PLC</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Post Leaving Certificate Course <b>Use:</b> PLC (Post Leaving Certificate Course) for the first reference. Use PLC after this.
<b>PMC</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Primary Medical Certificate <b>Use:</b> Primary Medical Certificate <b>Do not use:</b> PMC
<b>PPP</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Public Private Partnership <b>Use:</b> PPP (Public Private Partnership) for the first reference. Use PPP after this.
<b>PPS number</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Personal Public Service Number <b>Use:</b> Personal Public Service Number (PPS number) for the first reference. Use PPS number after this.
<b>PRA</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Property Registration Authority <b>Use:</b> Property Registration Authority (PRA) for the first reference in each section. Use PRA in the same section if the meaning is clear.
<b>PRSA</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Personal Retirement Savings Account <b>Use:</b> Personal Retirement Savings Account (PRSA) for the first reference. Use PRSA after this.
<b>PRSI</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Pay Related Social Insurance <b>Use:</b> PRSI (Pay Related Social Insurance) for the first reference. Use PRSI after this.
<b>PRTB</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Private Residential Tenancies Board <b>Use:</b> Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB) for the first reference in each section. Use PRTB for repeat references in the section if the meaning is clear.
<b>PTR</b>	<b>Full term:</b> Patient Treatment Register <b>Use:</b> Patient Treatment Register or the Register.

Abbreviation	How to use it
<b>QQI</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Quality and Qualifications Ireland (formerly HETAC, FETAC, NQAI)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) for the first reference. Use QQI in the same section if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>REA</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Registered Employment Agreement</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Registered Employment Agreement (REA) for the first reference in each section. Use REA for repeat references in the section if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>RIA</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Reception and Integration Agency</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) for the first reference in each section. Use RIA for repeat references in the section if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>ROS</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Revenue Online Service</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Revenue Online Service for the first reference in each section. Use ROS after this if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>RSA</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Road Safety Authority</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Road Safety Authority (RSA) for the first reference. Use RSA after this.</p>
<b>RTÉ</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Radio Teilifís Éireann (State broadcasting company)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> RTÉ.</p>
<b>SEAI</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) for the first reference. Use SEAI after this.</p>
<b>SEC</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> State Examinations Commission</p> <p><b>Use:</b> State Examinations Commission (SEC) for the first reference in each section. Use SEC for repeat references in the section.</p>
<b>SENO</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Special Educational Needs Organiser</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) for the first reference in each section. Use SENO for repeat references within the same section if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>SI</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Statutory Instrument</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Statutory Instrument when speaking generally. Use SI with a specific reference, as in SI 404/2014.</p>
<b>SIPTU</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union</p> <p><b>Use:</b> SIPTU. This is widely understood but explain the abbreviation if the information would be useful.</p>
<b>SLIS</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Sign Language Interpreting Service</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS) for the first reference in each section. Use SLIS after this if the meaning is clear</p>

Abbreviation	How to use it
<b>SNA</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Special Needs Assistant</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Special Needs Assistant (SNA) for the first reference in each section. Use SNA for repeat references within the same section if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>SOLAS</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> SOLAS Further Education and Training Authority (An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna) (formerly FÁS)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> SOLAS</p>
<b>sq</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> square (a unit of area measurement)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> square for occasional occurrences. Use sq as in 125sq m (lower case, no full stops) for repeated sets of measurements, such as in tables and lists.</p>
<b>SRCP</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> standard rate cut-off point (relates to taxation matters)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> standard rate cut-off point (SRCP) for the first reference in each section. Use SRCP for repeated references within the same section if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>STI</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> sexually transmitted infection</p> <p><b>Use:</b> sexually transmitted infection (STI) for the first reference. Use STI after this.</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> STD or sexually transmitted disease</p>
<b>SUSI</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> SUSI</p>
<b>SWA</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Supplementary Welfare Allowance</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) for the first reference in each section. Use SWA after this if the meaning is clear</p>
<b>TD</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Teachta Dála (member of the lower house of the Oireachtas)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> TD. Explain the term in English if you think it may be unclear for some readers. Use TD (Teachta Dála) for the first reference in relevant articles on the Constitution.</p>
<b>TEFL</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Teaching English as a Foreign Language (a qualification)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) for the first reference. Use TEFL after this.</p>
<b>UK</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> United Kingdom (refers to England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland)</p> <p><b>Use:</b> UK, when referring to the four countries above as a group</p> <p><b>Never use:</b> UK and Northern Ireland</p>
<b>US</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> United States of America</p> <p><b>Use:</b> United States or US</p> <p><b>Do not use:</b> America</p>
<b>USC</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Universal Social Charge</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Universal Social Charge (USC) for the first reference. Use USC after this.</p>

Abbreviation	How to use it
<b>VAT</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Value Added Tax</p> <p><b>Use:</b> VAT. This is widely understood but give the full term if it may be unclear to some readers.</p>
<b>VRT</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Vehicle Registration Tax</p> <p><b>Use:</b> VRT (Vehicle Registration Tax) for the first reference. Use VRT after this.</p>
<b>VTOS</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme</p> <p><b>Use:</b> VTOS (Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme) for the first reference. Use VTOS after this.</p>
<b>WHO</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> World Health Organization</p> <p><b>Use:</b> World Health Organization (WHO) for the first reference in each section. Use WHO for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear.</p>
<b>WRC</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Workplace Relations Commission</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) for the first reference. Prefer the full name as this is a new organisation.</p>
<b>WRCS</b>	<p><b>Full term:</b> Workplace Relations Customer Services</p> <p><b>Use:</b> Workplace Relations Customer Services (WRCS) for the first reference in each section. Use WRCS for repeat references within the section if the meaning is clear.</p>

## Appendix 3: CIB Guidelines

These guidelines should be used when referring to the Citizens Information Board, CISs, CICs, CIPS, MABS as well as the Citizens Information brand and website.

### *Referring to the Citizens Information Board*

The official name of the organisation is the Citizens Information Board. Use “the” before the organisation title. For example:

The Citizens Information Board published a report...

You can use the abbreviation CIB in written text. However the full name should be always used at the start of each paragraph or section. Do not use *the* before the abbreviation. For example:

The Citizens Information Board (CIB) today published a report. The report includes the results of a study by CIB...

The term *Board* can be used to refer to the organisation (as used in the Act), but care should be taken with this term as it is also used to refer to the Board (as in the Board of Management). For example:

The Citizens Information Board (CIB) today published a report. The report includes the results of a study by the Board...

The Board shall consist of 20 members.

### *Referring to Citizens Information Services and the Citizens Information Phone Service*

Use Citizens Information Services when referring to the network of Citizens Information Services. Use the abbreviation CISs after the first use. Note that no apostrophe should be used. Use an apostrophe only where the possessive is being used. For example:

Citizens Information Services (CISs) offer a range of information, advice and advocacy services. CISs are staffed by...

CISs' budgets come from...

Use Citizens Information Service when referring to an individual Citizens Information Service. For example:

Tallaght Citizens Information Service (CIS) had an information day...

Tallaght CIS's budget...

Only use Citizens Information Centre (CIC) when you are referring to a specific office or location. For example:

Contact your local Citizens Information Centre (CIC) for information on your rights and entitlements.

Nenagh CIC runs regular information sessions.

When referring to the Citizens Information Phone Service, spell out the term on first use with the acronym CIPS and then use CIPS in the rest of the section or paragraph. For example:

The Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS)...

CIPS's budget comes from...

### *Referring to Citizens Information*

*Citizens Information* is part of our brand identity. The phrase never takes an apostrophe and is always capitalised when used as part of our branding. Use Citizens Information when referring to the range of services offered by CISs, CIPS and citizensinformation.ie. Use citizens' information when referring to other contexts or countries. Use *citizensinformation.ie* (lower case and omit www) when referring to the Citizens Information website. Use capital C only if it is at the start of a sentence. For example:

You can access Citizens Information in a variety of ways.

In Norway citizens' information is delivered...

Access to independent free citizens' information is important in a democratic society.

Our website, citizensinformation.ie, gives comprehensive information on all aspects of rights and entitlements.

Citizensinformation.ie gives comprehensive information...

### *Referring to the Money Advice and Budgeting Service*

The Money Advice and Budgeting Service is generally referred to as MABS. Again the full name should be spelt out at the start of the section or paragraph like this: *The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)*. When using the acronym *MABS* do not use *the* at the start of the word. Do not use the term *the MABS service* since the word *Service* is part of the acronym. Use all capital letters, not *Mabs*. For example:

The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) is a free, confidential service. MABS has offices around Ireland.

MABS is a free confidential service...

Visit your local MABS office for more information.

Galway MABS is located...

### *Abbreviations*

Note that you should not use an article, *the*, before the abbreviated forms of organisations: CIB, CIPS, MABS – not the CIPS, the MABS etc. Do not use *the* before CIS when referring to a specific CIS (Northside CIS not the Northside CIS). However you can use *the* before CIS when not referring to a specific CIS – generally in governance and similar documents. For example:

The CIS must remain within budget and notify CIB of any cost overruns.

## Appendix 4: Writing styles

### *Writing a report*

A report is a structured document that examines an issue or problem in some detail and often ends with conclusions and recommendations.

#### **Format**

When writing a report the format is usually organised into the following sections:

- Title
- Table of contents (for longer reports)
- Summary: a short general overview of the report
- Introduction: explanation of the general ideas to be developed in the body of the report
- Body: main section of the report. This should have several sections, each with a subtitle. The information should be broken into short topics and each topic should be covered in one paragraph. Each paragraph should start with the topic sentence. A topic sentence should explain what the body of the paragraph will cover.
- Conclusion: summary of the main points of the report
- Recommendations: if included in a report, list them in order of priority.
- Appendix: other material relevant to your report, for example, a glossary of terms
- References – list any sources (print, online or other media) used or quoted when compiling your report here, as well as in the text.

#### **Other style points**

For reports and other publications, the numbers from zero to nine are spelled out. Use digits for 10 and above.

The maximum length of a sentence should be between 25 and 30 words . A paragraph should have no more than eight lines .

When citing electronic sources in a bibliography, include the date the material was accessed and the web address.

### *Writing for the web*

Writing for the web is not the same as writing for printed publications. Users tend to skim text looking for clues about the content. They need short chunks of information presented under useful headings or broken up in lists and tables. Subheads, paragraphs, and bullet points should start with information-carrying words that users will notice.

The main rules for writing online material are as follows:

- Put the most important information first. This applies to headings, to the first paragraph and to the first sentence in each paragraph.
- Use meaningful headings and subheadings to attract attention
- Use active verbs as much as possible.
- Address the readers directly.

- Use plain English and explain any difficult or unfamiliar terms, such as legal vocabulary.
- Use subheadings, bulleted lists, and tables to present complex ideas.
- Use bold text to highlight important keywords and phrases.

### **Other style points**

Sentences and paragraphs should be short: a maximum of 20-25 words in a sentence, and a maximum of 45-50 words for paragraphs or a maximum of five sentences for a paragraph.

For online writing, use digits for all numbers as this makes the information more accessible for online readers.

When citing electronic sources in a bibliography, you should include the date the material was accessed and the web address, which would be a link in an online document – see *8. References*.

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