

Polling station notices

Function

‘Guidance to voters’ notices, which explain the voting process, are displayed inside and outside polling stations in the UK on polling day. These are referred to in this guidance as ‘polling station notices’.

The function of the polling station notice is to give the voter information about the election and voting, and to tell them how to mark their vote on the ballot paper.

To do this, the notice needs to:

- stand out and attract attention
- say what it is for, and tell the voter why they should read it
- be easy to read, understand and follow

Style

- Print in A2 size. If this is not possible, use a minimum size of A3.



Explanation

- Polling station notices need to attract attention (especially as there are likely to be other posters on display unrelated to the election) and need to be easily read at a distance.
 - A2 size allows for text to be in a large enough font size to be easily read.
- Use visual aids, e.g. icons, pictures and diagrams to illustrate information and instructions.



Explanation

- Icons help to identify and distinguish between different types of information.
- Pictures help to reinforce the message in the text and are particularly helpful for people who have difficulty reading or following written instructions.
- Pictures also help notices to look visually appealing and help draw people into reading them.

- Consider using colour:
 - for pictures
 - for creating and defining blocks or sections of information
 - for colour-coding information
 - to reflect the colour of the ballot paper

? Detailed guidance:
Colour and
contrast
(Section 6D)

i Explanation

- Colour makes notices visually appealing, professional and less austere than just monochrome.
- Colour blocking helps to distinguish separate sections of information.

- Emphasise the title of the notice so it stands out and attracts attention.

? Detailed guidance:
Adding emphasis
(Section 6A)

i Explanation

- Emphasising the title makes the notice stand out, so voters are more likely to see and read it.
- This is especially useful if the polling station already has lots of posters not related to the election, e.g. a school hall.

Content and structure

- Include a statement at the top of the poster to direct voters to read it.

i Explanation

- People will not read something if they do not think it is relevant to them, especially if they are in a rush, or have voted before.
- You need to attract the voter's attention and tell them why they should read the notice.

- Put the name of the election at the top of the notice.


i Explanation

- This helps to identify the notice, remind the voter what the election is, and links the notice to the other materials being used at that election.

- Only include the information and instructions the voter needs before they get to the booth.

Explanation

- You only need to tell the voter what they need to know at that point in the process.
- Voters will not remember what was on the notice when they are in the booth. Information they need in the booth should be on the polling booth notice.

 **Polling booth notices**
(Section 4C)

- Separate the instructions for the process from general information about voting.
- Group instructions together, in order, and number them. This makes them easier for the voter to read and follow.

Explanation

- Separating the instructions from information about voting makes them easier to read and follow. It can be confusing if they are mixed with other information.
- Having information and instructions separately also helps to break up the text on the page into manageable sections. Having all the text together can be intimidating and off-putting as it makes the process look long and complicated.

- Put the information and instructions in the order they are needed:
 - general information first
 - follow the information with instructions (what to do next)

Explanation

- This ordering means that the voter gets the context and any general information they need about the election first.
- Putting the instructions after the information means that these are the last thing the voter reads before they go to collect their ballot paper.