



Each case is unique and must be considered on its merits. It is for the person appointed to determine the case to satisfy him/herself that the application of the practice contained in this note is appropriate to the circumstances of the case. A reporter who intends to depart from the guidance should advise his/her SGL so issues emerging can be considered for future case work.

<p>Guidance note:</p>	<p>Reporters' decisions – house style</p>
<p>DPEA practice:</p>	<p>Decisions should be succinct, and written in plain English. Things to avoid include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very long sentences¹ and paragraphs² • multiple clauses in sentences • jargon • Latin terms. <p>Normal text must be written in Arial, point 12, in accordance with Scottish Government policy.</p> <p>Text must be left aligned, not justified. (Note: the RNIB states that paragraph text which is left aligned is easier to read.)</p> <p>Avoid setting text in italics as this makes it difficult for visually impaired readers to recognise word shape.</p> <p>Quotes should not be set in italics, but should be within quotation marks. Single inverted commas should be used to denote a quote within a sentence of text.</p> <p>The case reference, in both the introductory bullets and in the header, must be set out in the format: PPA-300-2020. Remember to over-write 'Appeal Ref(s)' in the header.</p> <p>Dates should be in the format 8 March 2019.</p> <p>A sentence should never start with a figure – it should always begin with a word.</p> <p>A figure should never be split from its subject. For example, '200 people' or '12 January' should be kept together on the same line. (Use shift/control/space.)</p> <p>Similarly, titles such as Mr or Ms should be on the same line as the subsequent surname (for example, 'Mr Smith'). If first names or initials are used, these should be on the same line as the title. For example, Mr John Smith may be split, with 'Mr John' on one line and 'Smith' on the next line.</p>

A line should not start with a mid-sentence dash. The dash should be on the same line as the word that precedes it.

Use a single space between sentences, as double spaces can be problematic for visually impaired readers. There should be one space after a comma, a semi-colon or a colon. Do not use a capital letter after a colon.

Sub-headings should be used, other than in very short decision notices. These should typically reflect the determining issues, and should be underlined.

Never have a sub-heading at the foot of a page. Similarly, never have a signature at the head of a page.

Reasoning should generally be written in the first person, with an active voice rather than third person passive. For example “I consider that...” rather than “it is considered that...”

Words such as ‘appellant’, ‘council’, ‘planning authority’, ‘planning officer’ and ‘local plan’ should start with lower case letters. By contrast, the main words in ‘Scottish Ministers’, ‘Scottish Government’, ‘Fife Council, and ‘Perth and Kinross Local Development Plan’ should start with upper case letters.

Organisations (such as a council, SEPA, SNH) should be referred to in the singular.

Use lower case for standard measurements: kg; km; ha.
Exception: Spell out metres to prevent confusion with abbreviation for million.
Note: do not include a space between the number and the unit:
20km.

When referring to noise levels, the correct notation should be used. For example, 40 dB L_{A90} using the subscript button on the Word toolbar.

Unless clarity (e.g. use in a measurement) or consistency dictates otherwise, numbers one to nine should be in text. Those from 10 onwards should be in numerals.

Use upper case for all abbreviations and acronyms and spell out on first mention, including the abbreviation or acronym in brackets. e.g. Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). After the first mention always use the acronym.

When referring to the effects of a proposal at a time before it has been determined whether that proposal will go ahead, the use of ‘would’ rather than ‘will’ is appropriate. For example “the proposed wind farm would employ one full-time worker”.

In decision notices, paragraph numbers should run sequentially (1, 2, 3...) and automatic numbering can be used. In reports, paragraph numbers should run sequentially by chapter (1.1, 1.2; 2.1, 2.2) and automatic numbering is now included in the template.

Finally, being internally consistent within notices or reports is just as important as sticking rigidly to house style.

¹ Typically 15-20 words is about right. This can be checked by looking at the readability statistics using the 'ABC Spelling and Grammar' icon (Review menu of Word 2010) (You may need to turn this feature on first. To do so, click on File, then 'Options', then 'Proofing'. Under **When correcting spelling and grammar in Word**, make sure the 'Check grammar with spelling' check box is selected and then select the 'Show readability statistics' check box.).

² Long paragraphs can be split for presentation and to draw breath. Shorter paragraphs of separate thought should not be conjoined.