The Office for National Statistics (ONS) uses infographics to explain and offer insightful stories for the general public in an easy to understand and consumable manner, about the data we collect.

**ONS infographics should be:**


These guidelines set out the standards and best practice for developing ONS corporate infographics.

**What is an infographic?**

*An infographic is a self-contained visual story, presenting information, data or knowledge clearly, with meaning and context, and without bias.*

*An infographic is not* a visual list, a group of large numbers with supporting graphics, a collection of stats, or codependent on another release, article, or report.
Work together

This framework outlines the processes and key roles required to deliver high quality and consistent corporate infographics.

Please ensure that these key roles are carried out by professionals with the appropriate skill sets, for further information contact the teams listed on the back cover.

Outline story
Before starting work ensure everyone understands the story the infographic is going to tell. Meet in person or over the phone.

Concept ideas
Turn the story ideas into rough concepts. Include titles, data presentation and annotation. Then focus on refining story structure and flow.

Visual design
Apply design rules to the concept (see ‘Visual Design Rules’). Refine hierarchy and flow. Focus on story clarity.

Review
Review the final design and discuss whether the story is effective. Be honest and open, anything can be refined at this stage.

Sign Off
Send to required parties to seek sign off before releasing.

Release
Release to required channels, e.g., website, media relations, social media.
‘If it isn’t a challenge it’s not worth doing’.
- Data visualisation Guardian Masterclass

You are a storyteller. Don’t just copy and paste data. Construct a story with context and flow.

Know your audience and purpose
Who is the target audience? Tailor the infographic to your audience, consider which release channel is appropriate e.g., website, social media

Let the data lead the story...
..but don’t assume you know what the story is e.g., what about an emerging trend, is the story relevant to the audience?

Add context
Challenge yourselves to highlight or introduce something to improve the story e.g., annotate key dates on a time series chart

Always be accurate
Keep checking back with your sources, as manipulation of data will occur throughout the developmental process

Organise the information
Left to right, top to bottom - is how this will be read

Keep it simple - show don’t tell
Not just large numbers, combine white space with simple visuals

Teach users something new
Will the user learn something? Yes = success, No = time to refine or rethink
Tell the best possible story

Here are five examples of common infographics. All follow ONS’ infographic style. Use them as starting points to help structure story flow and hierarchy of information.

EXAMPLE ONE
Capturing the state of industry or trend

More older people divorcing

DIVORCE RATE 1950 TO 2011

RISE IN DIVORCE RATE AMONG OLDER MEN
Per 1,000 married men

LENGTH OF MARRIAGE IN 2011 FOR MEN 60+ YRS

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Office for National Statistics
Consumer Prices Index (CPI)

The CPI measures the change in the general level of prices charged for goods and services bought for the purpose of household consumption in the UK. It forms the basis for the UK Government's inflation target that the Bank of England’s Monetary Policy Committee is required to achieve.

By ‘chain-linking’ calculations it takes account of changes in the make-up of the shopping basket from year to year, along with ‘like for like’ comparisons between different years. It ensures that the index is not distorted when items are either removed from, or introduced into the CPI ‘shopping basket’.

Combined together using weights from current year to produce overall average price index

Individual prices of goods and services are compared to prices in the previous January

The final stage is to link the average price index with the figures for earlier years.

INDEX WEIGHTING

As we spend more on some items than others, the components of the index are ‘weighted’ to ensure that it reflects the importance of the various items in the average shopping basket, and the amounts we spend in different regions of the country and in different types of shops.

16%  9%  41%  8%  26%

FOOD & CATERING  ALCOHOL & TOBACCO  HOUSING & HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURE  PERSONAL EXPENDITURE  TRAVEL & LEISURE

(2013 Percentages)
Providing a natural ending or conclusion will make the infographic more memorable.
The personal well-being questionnaire conducted annually takes the pulse of the national mood, here are this year's findings.

**Personal Well-Being 2012/2013**

**Satisfied with their life nowadays**
- 77%
- 1.2% increase from previous year

**Feel that the things in your life are worthwhile**
- 81%
- 0.7% increase from previous year

**Felt happy yesterday**
- 72%
- 0.5% increase from previous year

**Felt anxious yesterday**
- 21%
- 0.9% decrease from previous year
Household Debt in Great Britain 2008-10

- **£943 billion** TOTAL DEBT
- **£848 billion** PROPERTY DEBT
- **£95 billion** FINANCIAL DEBT

**Increase since 2006/08**
- Property debt: 3.1%
- Financial debt: 10.3%

Total debt figures based on July estimates. Financial figures based on May estimates.

**Households with debt**
- Every 4 in 10 households
- Median average property debt: £75,200
- Every 5 in 10 households
- Median average financial debt: £3,200

**Households considering their debt to be a heavy burden**
- **Property debt**
  - 15.2% change since 2006/08
  - 13.6%

- **Financial debt**
  - 1.8 change since 2006/08
  - 18.0%

**Sources**
- Wealth and Assets Survey, ONS.
- Notes: 1. Property debt includes liabilities held against a household's main residence only.
- 2. Median values exclude households without this form of debt.

**Notes**
- Financial figures based on May estimates.
- Total debt figures based on July estimates.

**Highest counts of property debt**
- Married/cohabiting couples with dependent children: 3.1%

**Highest counts of financial debt**
- Lone parent households with dependent children: 10.3%
UK Family size

OVERALL AVERAGE DEPENDENT CHILDREN PER FAMILY

1.7

1.6
FOR LONE PARENTS AND COHABITING COUPLES

1.8
FOR MARRIED COUPLES OR IN CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS

FAMILIES WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN

+5% Since 1996

3.7M FAMILIES

-2%

3.0M FAMILIES

-3%

1.1M

LOCATIONS WITH HIGHEST PERCENTAGE

TOWER HAMLETS
28%

NEWHAM
25%

BIRMINGHAM
24%

COMPARING FAMILIES WITH 3 OR MORE DEPENDENT CHILDREN ACROSS EUROPE

EXAMPLE FIVE
Simplifying complex information

Story flow tips

General tips

Present main take away first to set up story

Giving the viewer simple and easy insights to remember

Drilling down into the key points to offer additional insight

Bringing in data from other official sources to add extra context to the story

Icons used to support the data, not to visualise the data

Linking the story with the use of colour
Be consistent with design

These rules provide the basics for a designer to develop an infographic to corporate ONS house style.

When visualising the data, use the appropriate chart or method in its simplest form. If using icons, be sure they layer or become part of the storytelling in considered ways, think beyond just using them to support large numbers.

**COLOUR CHOICES**

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<thead>
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<th>PRIMARY COLOURS (RGB)</th>
<th>SECONDARY COLOURS (RGB)</th>
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</thead>
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</table>

When using colour always consider the saturation and luminance contrast, as this ensures that it can be seen by all and maintains readability.

www.ons.gov.uk

Sources / methodology. List them across the page until here and then onto the second line = open sans regular 10pt
Question your work

A QUICK CHECKLIST
Use as a quick reference, not as a substitute for following process.

☐ Double-checked the data is correct?

☐ Checked that all the data is visualised correctly?

☐ The design follows the visual design rules close enough?

☐ Someone else understands the story? (without prior explanation)

☐ The design is easy to follow, with all elements aligned?

☐ Would additional context help improve the story?

☐ Does the title frame the content correctly?

☐ Is the story presented self-contained and without bias?

CONSIDER DISTRIBUTION
Depending on channel, adjust final infographic for distribution.

Web
This is the main distribution method. Refer to the ONS web standards and house style guide for publishing on the ONS website.

Always use the dedicated ‘infographic’ Tridion schema.

For a richer user experience consider publishing in conjunction with other outputs eg short stories. Contact the Editorial Team for further information.

Social Media
The Social Media team can maximise reach to users utilising a number of digital channels. Infographics may need optimisation, check first.

Media coverage
The Media Relations team can maximise press coverage both locally and nationally.

For all contact details see back cover.
For general infographic and editorial queries contact:
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For design queries contact:
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For data visualisation queries contact:
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