



Office for
National Statistics

Infographic Guidelines



Version 1.0

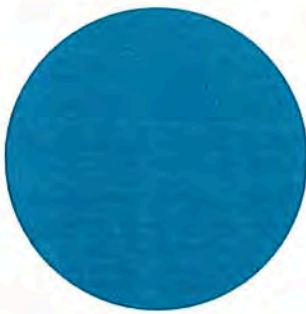


The Office for National Statistics (ONS) uses infographics to explain and offer insightful stories for the general public in an easy to understand and consumable manner, about the data we collect.

ONS infographics should be:

Informative . Effective . Functional . Honest . Elegant

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.



DESIGNER



DATA
ANALYSTS



WRITER



PROJECT
LEAD

Concept ideas

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



DESIGNER



DATA
ANALYSTS



WRITER



PROJECT
LEAD

Visual design

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



DESIGNER



DATA
ANALYSTS

Review

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



DESIGNER



DATA
ANALYSTS



WRITER



PROJECT
LEAD

Sign Off

Send to required parties to seek sign off before releasing.



PROJECT
LEAD

Release

Release to required channels, e.g., website, media relations, social media.



PROJECT
LEAD

'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.



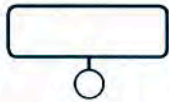
Know your audience and purpose

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

Story flow tips

Use title to set up the story



Give viewer background context about the subject to set up rest of story



Use subtitles to help with the flow of the story



Illustrate key messages and information using simple charts to visualise the data



Footer and logo (used on all infographics)

General tips

Call out boxes used to give context and identify key information

A call out is a term for a label used to identify a part of an illustration or chart

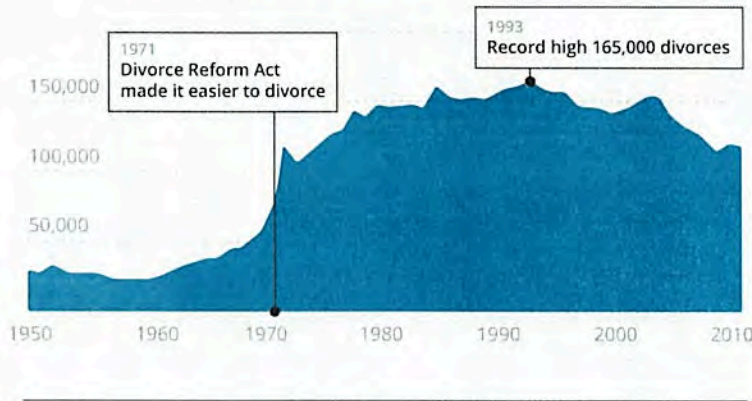
Use white (or negative) space to balance the composition of the graphic and aid accessibility

Consider different approaches for visualising the data

Strike a balance between visual appeal and comprehension

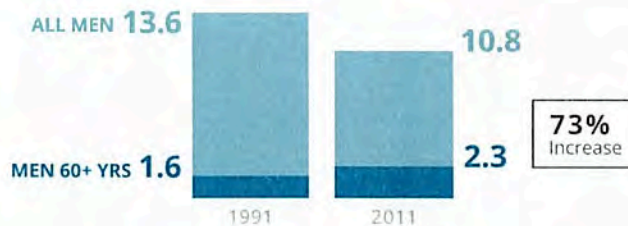
More older people divorcing

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



Providing a resource

Story flow tips

Use the title and introduction to provide context for viewer

Words can be used to highlight key data and messages

Break up the story into sections to explain breaks in the process

General tips

Background line used to help guide the viewer through the story

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.

APPROX **700**

SEPARATE GOODS AND SERVICES ARE SELECTED TO REFLECT TYPICAL HOUSEHOLD SPENDING

(Fixed for a 12 month period)



Commonly thought of in the context of a 'shopping basket', the prices of goods and services are collected on the second or third Tuesday of each month in 2 ways...

By price collectors
(staff from Research International acting on behalf of ONS)

110,000
PRICES
for **560** items



By ONS centrally

70,000
PRICES
for **140** items

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.



(2013 Percentages)

'Showing' comparisons in the data using shape area

Providing a resource (continued)

CALCULATING THE INDEX



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'.

Develop a simple diagram to highlight process and to add focus

Call out boxes used to present detailed information e.g., definitions, calculations.

Providing a natural ending or conclusion will make the infographic more memorable

HOW THE INDEX IS USED

THE CPI MEASURES PRICE CHANGES, NOT PRICE LEVELS.

...For example...



Reference date of 2005 is arbitrary, providing simply a convenient benchmark for comparison. The choice of date has no material effect on the measurement of price changes between one month and another.

Comparing A to B

Story flow tips

Use an introduction to provide background context for viewer



Use the same visual language can help with comparisons

General tips

Illustrations in silhouette form to add context

Lines to separate story points to let the viewer know they are in different parts of the story

A combination of simple data visualisations and words can present complex information effectively

A shortened form of the complete graphic could be used in social media channels

Personal Well-Being 2012/2013

The personal well-being questionnaire conducted annually takes the pulse of the national mood, here are this year's findings.



77%
SATISFIED WITH THEIR
LIFE NOWADAYS

 **1.2%** Increase from previous year



81%
FEEL THAT THE THINGS
IN YOUR LIFE ARE
WORTHWHILE

 **0.7%** Increase from previous year




72%
FELT HAPPY YESTERDAY

 **0.5%** Increase from previous year



21%
FELT ANXIOUS
YESTERDAY

 **0.9%** Decrease from previous year

Showing the evolution of a concept or industry

Story flow tips

Present the key story message or information first to grab viewers attention

General tips

Household Debt in Great Britain 2008-10



Dark line used to separate story sections

HOUSEHOLDS WITH DEBT

Flesh out the story with supporting information to offer more insights and create discussion points



Visualise data with the use of icons

Households considering their debt to be a heavy burden



Light line used to separate story points

Highest counts of property debt



Highest counts of financial debt



Simplifying complex information

Story flow 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

General tips

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

Linking the story with the use of colour

UK Family size

1.7



OVERALL AVERAGE DEPENDENT CHILDREN PER FAMILY

1.6



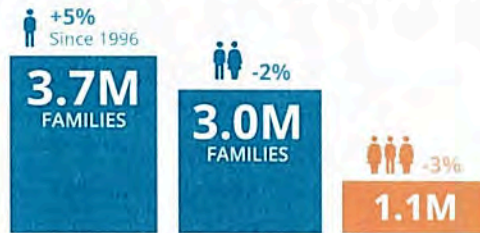
FOR LONE PARENTS AND COHABITING COUPLES

1.8



FOR MARRIED COUPLES OR IN CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS

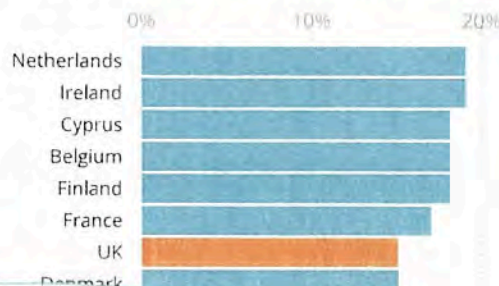
FAMILIES WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN



LOCATIONS WITH HIGHEST PERCENTAGE



COMPARING FAMILIES WITH 3 OR MORE DEPENDENT CHILDREN ACROSS EUROPE (1)



Be consistent with design

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

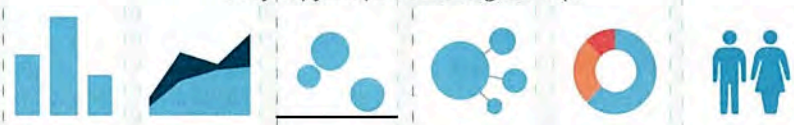
Full width 600px
1 Column layout 500px
2 Column layout 245px
75px

Title = Dax Medium 42pt

Introduction if required = Open Sans regular 13pt

SUBTITLE = OPEN SANS BOLD 22PT

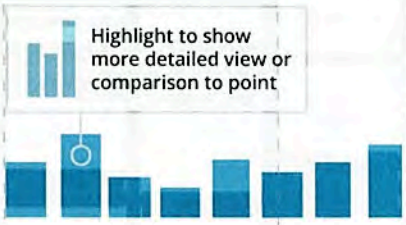
Body copy = Open Sans Regular 13pt




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.

USING ANNOTATION

Use annotation to help tell the story, along with adding context or to highlight



Highlight to show more detailed view or comparison to point



Zooming in to show more detail, creates a cleaner visual

COLOUR CHOICES

PRIMARY COLOURS (RGB)	SECONDARY COLOURS (RGB)	
0 . 132 . 209	0 . 61 . 89	144 . 176 . 201
255 . 149 . 14	255 . 211 . 32	255 . 66 . 14
65 . 64 . 66	128 . 128 . 128	204 . 204 . 204
	168 . 189 . 58	49 . 64 . 4

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

Length of infographic as required...

Templates with grids are available to help align elements

Use icons from the existing icon library

Contact the Design team for further information

Safe page scroll area. Ensure that story entry points and hook is above this to get the viewer to scroll down

Background colour (RGB) **242.242.242** used to differentiate from other website backgrounds

Extend footer down as required for source list.

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:
idp@ons.gsi.gov.uk

For design queries contact:
ons.design@ons.gsi.gov.uk

For data visualisation queries contact:
datavis@ons.gsi.gov.uk

For social media queries contact:
social.media@ons.gsi.gov.uk

For publishing queries contact:
publishing.support.team@ons.gsi.gov.uk

