

## Annex A: PROTECT style guidance

This guidance is not exhaustive – it includes a small number of key terms and points to apply when producing communications outputs in relation to PROTECT or any of its constituent studies. For more general, comprehensive style guidance, please refer to the [Government Digital Service \(GDS\) style guide](#), as used across HSE.

### General style points:

- Plain English: if content can be written in terminology that is understandable both to a scientific and non-specialist policy audience, then do so, even if its primary intended audience is scientific. If a plain English alternative for a term is available, use it. As a general guide, assume your audience has a GCSE level of science literacy (many policy professionals and ministers are arts graduates). This means outputs can be more easily reused for different purposes, rather than needing to be translated and rewritten. When more technical scientific terminology is required, it is easier to add this in for appropriate audiences than to remove it for non-specialists.
- Conciseness: if a word can be removed from a sentence without losing any meaning, then remove it – it makes communication more efficient for audiences with limited time. Watch out for unnecessary joining words (e.g. ‘that’ is often redundant), lists of synonyms, and run-on sentences.

### Terminology:

- PROTECT themes: refer to with a capital letter and digit, e.g. Theme 1, when referring to a specific theme (as these are names, they are an exception to the numbers rule below. Themes plural should use a lower-case t (themes).
- COVID-19: write in all capitals, consistent with GDS and WHO standard.
- Distinguishing between COVID-19 and SARS-CoV-2: many policy and other stakeholders may not understand the distinction between the two. While it is incorrect to say “COVID-19 transmission”, use the workaround of “the COVID-19 virus” or “the virus that causes COVID-19” when writing for/speaking to non-scientific audiences. If SARS-CoV-2 is used, there should be an explanatory bracket (the virus that causes COVID-19) after its first use. Remember to put the o in lower case.
- ‘COVID secure’: no dash. OK to use, but put in single quotation marks as this is a matter of degrees and not a yes/no binary.
- Environment: refer to the “physical environment”, “environmental conditions”, “places” and “settings”. “The environment” may be taken as related to macro-scale climate if the context is unclear, as this is its predominant usage in public discourse.
- Acronyms: with the exception of PROTECT itself, always spell out full names on first use, with the acronym following in brackets. Thereafter, you can just use the acronym. Do not assume your audience knows! Do not use ‘the’ before acronyms of organisation names.
- Government: lower case when referring to government/governments in general, upper case when referring to a specific one e.g. the UK Government. Be sure to specify which government when this is not totally clear from context, e.g. UK

Government when referring to Whitehall to distinguish from devolved governments, e.g. Scottish Government.

- National: as above, clarity is required. 'National' could mean UK, England, Scotland, Wales, etc. For clarity, use 'UK-wide' when this is the case (e.g. PROTECT is a UK-wide study).
- Face coverings: not 'face masks'. The latter refers to equipment classified and regulated as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), which is not the case for the coverings PROTECT uses in its research.

### Formatting:

- Keep paragraphs short: generally two to three sentences. It makes content much easier to scan for key points for audiences with limited time.
- Spacing: **only one space** after full stops.
- Quotation marks: double (""") for direct quotations only; single (") for titles and contested terms.
- And/&: always and, unless in the context of a tweet and you are struggling for space.
- Numbers: spelt out for single digit numbers, digits for larger numbers.
- Dates: day, month, year, formatted as e.g. 1 July 2021.
- Capitalisation: use sparingly – keep phrases lower case unless they are formalised names/titles.

## PROTECT Naming conventions

In titles and on its first mention in the body of any document or presentation, the study should be referred to as **the PROTECT COVID-19 National Core Study on transmission and environment**. On subsequent mentions within the same document, it should be referred to as '**the PROTECT study**'.

Using a consistent name in this way is critical to improving name and brand recognition and raising the profile of the study. Note, the inclusion of 'COVID-19' in the full name is important due to the low brand recognition of the National Core Studies (NCS) as a whole – many readers will be otherwise unaware this is what the NCS are about.

The full PROTECT acronym – the Partnership for Research in Occupational, Transport and Environmental COVID Transmission – should generally be avoided, and only be spelt out in more detailed content specifically exploring the origins of the PROTECT study, and/or in an explanatory footnote.

### Partner institution names

When mentioning another partner organisation from within the PROTECT programme, ensure the name is correctly rendered (e.g. check whether it is 'X University' or 'University of X'). This can be quickly checked by consulting the [partners list on the PROTECT website](#). If using the institution's logo, contact them or the PROTECT Portfolio Information Lead for the correct, high resolution image file (rather than pulling from the internet).

## **Annex B: PROTECT visual identity guidelines**

A template slide deck and selection of template documents will be provided that can be used as the visual basis for PROTECT communications. When adapting these and/or creating outputs from scratch, the following minimal guidelines should be applied.

### **Fonts:**

**Header level 1: Arial, size 20, bold**

**Header level 2: Arial, size 14, bold**

**Header level 3: Arial, size 11, bold**

Body text: Arial, size 11 (best for readability/visual accessibility).

### **Colours:**

PROTECT uses a simple four colour scheme to connect its visual identity to HSE, without needing to use the HSE logo.

Most text: RGB 0, 0, 0; hex #000000 (black)

Most backgrounds; text on feature backgrounds: RGB 255, 255, 255; hex #FFFFFF (white)

Feature backgrounds; link text, header levels 1 and 2: RGB 152, 30, 50; hex #981E32

Occasional highlight backgrounds: RGB 50, 114, 178; hex #3272B2

### **Logos:**

Make sure to use the new PROTECT logo developed in July 2021, high resolution files of which will be supplied in a number of formats. If you do not have these please contact [emorrow@hse.gov.uk](mailto:emorrow@hse.gov.uk).

This may appear alongside supplier/partner logos as appropriate on any given output, but to keep things uncluttered there should usually be no more than three logos used in one place.

### **Imagery:**

In keeping with PROTECT's key message about studying transmission in the 'real world', images used in communications outputs should generally focus on real people and control measures within the variety of environments we are investigating, in preference to abstract images of molecules and data points. There will necessarily be an initial reliance on stock imagery, but we will seek to build up a library of authentic images from across the studies to replace this.