

August 2024

Kidney Research UK style guide.



Kidney Research UK style guide.

Here's our copy glossary.

Although avoiding clichés is preferred, here's one for you: let's all sing from the same hymn sheet. Being consistent in our language helps us to look professional, intelligent and shows respect for the reader.

This guide is here to make life easier for you – fewer decisions to make about style, more time to end kidney disease!

We should be consistent in style across all of our audiences. However, there may be some medical terms where there is an exception. If you have a question, please speak to a member of the Research Comms team.

A

abbreviations and acronyms

- Kidney Research UK must not be abbreviated.
- Do not use full stops in abbreviations, or spaces between initials, including those in proper names: IMF, mph, eg, 4am, M&S.
- If an abbreviation or acronym is to be used more than once in a piece, put it in brackets at first mention: so Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC).
- Alternatively, if the organisation is well known enough by its acronym eg NSPCC, then use
- the abbreviation with a brief description, eg the children's charity the NSPCC. If an organisation is mentioned only once, it is not necessary to give its abbreviation or acronym.

addresses

- Like this: Kidney Research UK, Stuart House, City Road, Peterborough PE1 1QF
 - There is no need to use counties in addresses any more
 - No comma needed before postcode
- See R: [registered charity number](#).

addressing the charity

Always refer to Kidney Research UK in the first person, unless a formal tone is needed. Use 'we', 'we're' and 'our', rather than our full name. But try to avoid using 'our' when talking about the charity's groups or events as this could make old or new audiences feel excluded.

adviser

Not advisor.

affect/effect

- The patient was not affected (verb) by the change in temperature
- The change in temperature did not have an effect (noun) on the patient
- How to remember: if you have 'an' or 'the' before it, it's going to be effect

all right/alright

She got the answers all right.
She got the answers, alright!

amid

Not amidst.

among

Not amongst.

ampersands / &

As a general rule, we avoid these. Only use for T&Cs and in company names (when the company does): Johnson & Johnson, Marks & Spencer, etc.

animal research

Care should be taken when talking about the use of animals in research. Consider if it is appropriate to the audience and think about wording, (eg do not talk about animal models being sacrificed, which is common research terminology).

anxiety

Use this word where relevant when writing about mental health.

app

Lowercase.

B

BAME

We are aiming to move away from using the term BAME. The connotations and limitations of the term, which groups together and often generalises distinct minority ethnic groups, are becoming widely recognised. When being broad and covering a number of people from different communities use the term ‘minority ethnic communities’. However, when referring to specific minority ethnic communities use the exact ethnic group the people or person being referenced are from. Examples could be: Chinese, Asian, Indian, African-Caribbean. BAME also excludes white minority groups too, such as Roma or Traveller of Irish heritage.

banks

Banks that aren’t banks but share certain characteristics with banks are two words: blood bank, food bank, tissue bank.

Barts

Abbreviation for St Bartholomew’s Hospital, London.

breakthrough

Only use when referring to a specific piece of research that is genuinely a breakthrough.

Britain, UK

- These terms are synonymous: Britain is the official short form of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Used as adjectives, therefore, British and UK mean the same.
- Great Britain, however, refers only to England, Wales and Scotland. Take care not to write Britain when you might mean England and Wales, or just England

See also [Great Britain](#).

British Renal Society (BRS)

Use abbreviation BRS after first usage of name in full with abbreviation in parentheses (BRS).

British Transplant Society (BTS)

Use abbreviation BTS after first usage of name in full with abbreviation in parentheses (BTS).

board of trustees

- Lowercase when using as a stand-alone: The board of trustees approved the measure
- Capitalise when referring to the full proper noun, as in the NICE Board of Trustees

bullet points

If a list contains only single sentence bullet points, do not use full stops. However, if at least one bullet point has more than one sentence, take a full stop after each bullet, ie:

- This is the first bullet point
- This is the second
- And this is the third

OR...

- This is the first bullet point.
- This is the second. This bullet point has two sentences.
- And this is the third.

C

cabinet

Use shadow cabinet but Cabinet Office.

capital letters

- Words and phrases based on proper names that have lost connection with their origins (alsatian dog, cardigan, cheddar cheese, french windows, swiss roll, wellington boots, yorkshire pudding and many others) are lowercase.
- Where the name of a particular syndrome or disease is derived from the person who discovered it, use an initial capital letter (but not for the

word syndrome or disease), eg Alports syndrome, Dent disease.

- Those that retain a strong link, which may be legally recognised, include Cornish pasty, Melton Mowbray pork pies, Parma ham, Jersey Royal potatoes and Worcestershire sauce, and take initial cap.
- Although champagne and scotch are legally required to come from Champagne and Scotland, they are almost universally regarded as lowercase.
- Job titles are lowercase, eg chief executive, chair of trustees, finance director.
- To help comprehension, use initial caps for internal structures such as the Lay Advisory Group and the Research Strategy Committee.

cardiovascular

Use cardiovascular or heart and circulatory for a research audience or for a report for policymakers. Use heart and circulatory for a non-scientific audience.

care home

Rather than “old people’s home”.

CT scan

Use rather than Cat scan; it stands for computerised (axial) tomography.

central belt

Stretches from Glasgow in the west to Edinburgh in the east, where population density is highest. It is in the south, not the centre of the country.

Centre for Mental Health

It doesn’t have a ‘The’ before the name.

century

Sixth century, 21st century, etc; but sixteenth century remains, 21st-century boy, etc.

chair

Use in place of chairman or chairwoman

- Example: chair of trustees.
- If it seems inappropriate for a particular body, use a different construction (“the meeting was chaired by Ian” or “Kath was in the chair”).

Charity Commission

Title case.

chronic

This word is not to be used in everyday language. Only use when talking about chronic kidney disease (CKD) specifically.

chronic kidney disease (CKD)

Lowercase. Can be abbreviated to CKD after first use.

cisgender or cis

A person whose identity aligns with their sex observed at birth. From the Latin cis, meaning “on the same side”. Used when comparing the trans experience with that of the non-trans population, eg how trans men and cis men navigate the health service.

citations

See R: [references](#).

clinician

Never use. Use doctor instead.

compass points

- Lowercase for regions: eg the north, the south of England, the southwest, north-east Scotland, south Wales.
- Cap up, however, when part of the name of a county: (eg West Sussex, East Riding of Yorkshire).
- Note the following: East End, West End (London).

conditions

Use conditions instead of disorders.

contractions

We use these to appear more informal and friendly. Use we’ve, it’s, didn’t etc. However, don’t use more than two in a sentence. There are a couple not to use:

- It’s (where the s represents has)
- There’ve
- Do not abbreviate it will or that will to it’ll or that’ll.
- Beware of using ‘d as it can be an abbreviation of had or would, for example, it’d been a nice day, (it had), it’d be nice to go out (it would). Always better to write out in full to avoid any confusion for the reader.

coronavirus outbreak 2019-20

The virus is officially called Sars-CoV-2 and this causes the disease Covid-19. However, for ease of communication, follow the same practice as the WHO and use Covid-19 to refer to both the virus and the disease. It can also continue to be referred to as the coronavirus (although if a different coronavirus breaks out, it could be misleading).

- Always upper case Covid, even mid-sentence eg Covid not covid. Covid-19 not covid-19.
- Do not hyphenate long Covid.

D

dashes (also see hyphens)

If you want to use a dash to help break up a sentence as an alternative to a comma, a colon or brackets, make sure to use an En dash, not a hyphen, and make sure it has a space either side. An En dash is the length of a capital N. Word should auto format this for you, if you:

- Type a word, with a space after it.
- Type a single hyphen, with a space after it.
- Type another word.
- Type a space.

It should appear as follows: eg, she looked down – it was very deep – and sighed.

dates

Thursday 11 October 2021.

- If you have to contract, always use three letters.
- Thu 12 Sep.
- Date ranges: dash between dates, with spaces. E.g. 3 – 4 April.

Never use:

- Thursday the 11 October (even though that's how you say it).
- October 11.

We do not use the st and th on dates, eg 11th October (unless you are writing about an anniversary or birthday, eg we are celebrating our 60th anniversary this year)

diabetes

- There are two types of diabetes, type 1 and type 2, and it is important to distinguish between the two.
- Always use lower case t in type and also for diabetes.
- Never say 'diabetics' - always 'people with type 2 diabetes'.

Diabetes UK

Formerly known as the British Diabetic Association.

disability

- Disabled people not "the disabled".
- Use positive language about disability, avoiding outdated terms that stereotype or stigmatise.
- Note that in the UK there is no central register of disabled people so avoid using terms such as "registered disabled".
- Terms to avoid, with acceptable alternatives in brackets, include:
 - Victim of, suffering from, afflicted by, crippled by (prefer person who has, person with).
 - Wheelchair-bound, in a wheelchair (uses a wheelchair).
 - Person who is less able, invalid (disabled person).

disability cont.

- Mentally handicapped, backward, retarded, slow (person with learning difficulties or disabilities).
- The disabled, the handicapped, the blind, the deaf (disabled people, blind people, deaf people, visually impaired, hearing impaired).
- Deaf and dumb (deaf and speech impaired, hearing and speech impaired).

Dr

No full stop after Dr.

drug names

When talking about individual drugs, always refer to them by their generic name, in lower case. Avoid referring to them by their brand name unless necessary and only then after using the generic name first. Always capitalise the brand name, eg New guidance has been issued recommending empagliflozin, a type of medicine known as an SGLT2-inhibitor, usually given to people with diabetes. This is sold under the brand name Jardiance.

E

emojis

Use in social media and in informal, light-hearted emails. If unsure, leave out.

end stage

This is specific to kidney disease progression.

ethnicity

A person's ethnicity should only be included if relevant to the story. The words Black and Asian should not be used as nouns, but as adjectives: Black people rather than "Blacks", an Asian woman rather than "an Asian", etc.

- Do not use the term "race".
- Always upper case Black, Asian, South Asian.
- Always lower case white.
- Say African-Caribbean rather than Afro-Caribbean.

F

Facebook

Capital 'F'.

full stops

Full stops should be used at the end of all sentences, quotes and bullet points (but not necessarily headlines or subheads in running copy).

Fundraising Regulator logo

See Brand Guidelines for usage.

G

gender

Try to choose terminology accurately according to what you are writing about. Use 'sex' when referring to the biological aspects of an individual/individuals assigned at birth. Use 'gender' to talk about how people identify (which may not match the sex they were assigned at birth).

The UK government defines gender as:

- a social construction relating to behaviours and attributes based on labels of masculinity and femininity; gender identity is a personal, internal perception of oneself and so the gender category someone identifies with may not match the sex they were assigned at birth.

- where an individual may see themselves as a man, a woman, as having no gender, or as having a non-binary gender – where people identify as somewhere on a spectrum between man and woman.

For a definition see S: [sex](#), see page 10.

gene faults

Use gene faults instead of genetic mutation.

Gifts in Wills

Use this term (capital 'G' and capital 'W') instead of legacy.

government

When referring specifically to 'the Government' (for example, 'when the Government decides its policy'), use a capital 'G'. However, when referring to government in general (for example, 'national and local government'), or as an adjective (for example, 'many government departments'), use a lowercase 'g'.

H

hashtags

Where there is more than one word in a hashtag, use title case, otherwise use lowercase eg [#kidneys](#) [#TeamKidney](#).

heart and circulatory

When describing cardiovascular disease, use 'heart and circulatory disease' for a non-scientific audience. However, use cardiovascular or heart and circulatory for a research audience or for a report for policymakers.

hyphen

A hyphen joins two or more words together while an En dash separates words. Hyphens are not separated by spaces, while an En dash has a space on either side.

I

internet

net, web, world wide web.

innovative

Avoid where possible.

Instagram

Capital 'I'.

J

job title

Are all lowercase: chief executive, consultant nephrologist, chair of trustees.

K

Kidney Research UK

- Always write in full (do not abbreviate).
- The term is in title case (capital K and R and UK).
- The term is singular, so Kidney Research UK is the leading.../ Kidney Research UK has a number.../.

kidney disease

- Lowercase.
- Singular.
- Use kidney disease as a catch-all term for all the different types of kidney diseases.

kidney failure

Use to describe the last stage of kidney disease when patients reach the point at which they are reliant on dialysis or transplant to stay alive.

kidney problems

Use as a catch-all term, including when talking about physiological problems rather than chronic disease, eg particularly in young children when physical formation of organs might be the problem.

kilograms, kilojoules, kilometres, kilowatts
Abbreviate as kg, kJ, km, kW.

L

lack of funds

We often have to explain we have to turn away proposals due to lack of funds. Use this wording: We have to turn down grants with enormous scientific merit, simply because we don't have the money available to fund them.

Latin abbreviations

Do not use full stops for eg, ie, etc (only use one after etc if it is the end of the sentence).

leading charity

Do not use this term. Refer to Kidney Research UK as: The leading kidney research charity in the UK.

legacy

Don't use this word. Instead, use Gift in Will rather than legacy unless writing formal information regarding our accounts and referring to legacy income.

LGBTQ+

Abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and other identities; it is not necessary to spell it out.

life-limiting

From our vision. Because it has a noun afterwards (life-limiting nature) there is a hyphen. It forms an adjectival noun phrase. See H: [hyphens](#).

life-saving vs life saving

As above.

- We do life-saving work
- Our work is life saving

limited

Ltd is preferable, when referring to a company.

LinkedIn

Capital 'L' and 'I', one word.

lists

1. Similar to bullet points.
2. Like this.
3. With a full point after the number. (Word etc will default to this style)

logo

See Brand Guidelines for usage.

lottery, national lottery, Lotto, National Lottery Commission

M

media

The media, including social media, are plural, so television might be your favourite medium of all the media.

mental health

- Terms to avoid - because they stereotype and stigmatise - include victim of, suffering from, and afflicted by; "a person with" or "living with mental illness" is clear, accurate and preferable to "a person suffering from".
- Terms such as schizophrenic and psychotic should be used only in a medical context. They should only be used as adjectives, not nouns.
- Avoid writing "the mentally ill" - say mental health patients or people with mental health problems.

Midlands

- the Midlands.
- East Midlands.
- West Midlands.

midnight

Not 12 midnight, 12am or 12pm.

money

£1.25; 99p; £10, not £10.00 unless critical to the context, eg the pence in the pound figure representing how much money is put into research in the annual report.

multidisciplinary

Don't use for a lay audience. Instead list the different disciplines that have collaborated eg a kidney doctor worked with an engineer, a mathematician and a chemist. Alternatively, use: scientists and doctors from different disciplines.

multi morbid or multimorbidity

Don't use. Instead, use: people who live with two or more health conditions.

Mum or mum?

When the term for a family member is being used as a name, capitalise: Mum, Dad, Grandad etc, eg "Mum was a lovely person". When a family member is being referred to in terms of their relationship it changes to lower case, eg "my mum was a lovely person".

N

names and titles

Use professional titles when first mentioning an individual (Dr Helen Slater, Professor, etc) then refer to them by their first name. For royal or conferred titles (such as Baroness or Lord), do not use first names. For example, use Baroness Simpson.

national curriculum

Lowercase.

National Health Service

But NHS or health service is normally sufficient. No need to explain acronym.

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

NICE after first mention.

NHSScotland

One word, capital NHSS.

NHS trust

When referring to NHS trusts in general use lowercase t. When using the name of a trust, use title case: North Bristol NHS Trust.

non-binary

Non-binary people identify as neither a woman nor a man. Their gender may feel like both or somewhere in between and it may change over time.

non-white

Do not use this term.

noon

Not 12 noon, 12am or 12pm.

north

- north London
- north Wales
- north-west England
- the north-west
- north-east England

Northern Ireland

- Can be referred to as a country or region, do not refer to it as a province or as Ulster.
- People from Northern Ireland may refer to themselves as Northern Irish, Irish or British; we should respect that choice where known and relevant, but otherwise refer to people as Northern Irish.

novel

Don't use. Use new instead.

numbers

- Write as words one to ten; then after that use numerals: 11, 12 etc. Except at the start of a sentence: Twelve years ago. Use numerals when associated with units: 4 miles, 7km, 6 hours, 2 days, sixth, 16th etc.
- Thousands: use £218k for graphics, social posts and online. Use £218,000 for formal documents such as research proposals, funds and the annual report.
- Million and billion written out in full, with a space before, eg 20 million people, £20 million but £20m (when second reference to £x million in story).

O

obesity / overweight

We no longer say 'being obese or overweight' as it pushes the blame onto the patient, the obesity health alliance and published research now refers to 'having overweight or obesity' a bit like we may refer to someone having cancer. Living with overweight or obesity is also acceptable..

P

patients

The term patients can be used to describe any of the following: people with kidney disease, kidney patients, those living with kidney disease.

pdf

Lowercase.

%

Not per cent.

pensioners

Not old age pensioners or OAPs; older people is preferable to "elderly people" or (even worse) the elderly.

plc

Lowercase.

postcode

One word.

prevalence

Don't use. Instead, use number of people, eg: There are around 33,000 people living with chronic kidney disease in Townsville.

professor

When using it as a title Professor Jane Jones, use a capital P. Otherwise, it is lowercase: the professor spoke clearly. If you need to refer to the person again in a document, shorten to the first name (Jane).

Q

quotation marks

- Use double quotes at the start and end of a quoted section, with single quotes for quoted words within that section. Place full points and commas inside the quotes for a complete quoted sentence; otherwise the point comes outside – “Anna said: ‘Your style guide needs updating,’ and I said: ‘I agree.’” but: “Anna said updating the guide was ‘a difficult and time-consuming task’.”
- Use double quotation marks for words that aren’t actually quotations. But do this sparingly, for example: These are the people who put the “style” in style guide.

R

race

Don’t refer to race. Use ethnicity.

references

See Paperpile for a guide on how to format correctly: brws.it/reference.

regenerative medicine

Don’t use. Instead, use stem cell research.

registered charity numbers

We must include our registered charity numbers, as well as our address and that we are a limited company, on all company documents, publicity and letters. Use the following:

Kidney Research UK is a limited company registered in England. Registered office: Stuart House, City Road, Peterborough PE1 1QF. Registered charity no. 252892. Scottish charity no. SC039245. (Always ensure the Scottish charity number has a zero not a letter after the c). Registered company no. 905963.

renal

Use kidney instead.

Renal Association

As there are lots of organisations that abbreviate to RA, we don’t recommend using RA.

renal replacement therapy (RRT)

Don’t use when communicating with lay people. Instead use: treatment such as dialysis or kidney transplant.

RNIB

Royal National Institute of Blind People (no longer “the Blind”).

RNID

The Royal National Institute for Deaf People changed its name to Action on Hearing Loss in June 2011.

Royal College of Surgeons

The college or the royal college is preferable to the RCS on subsequent mentions.

S

scientific names

In italics. With the first name (denoting the genus) capped, the second (denoting the species) lowercase: *Escherichia coli*. The name can be shortened by using the first initial: *E coli* (but we do not use a full point after the initial).

scientist

To use in place of researcher if needed. But check accuracy: some medics/health professionals may not label themselves as scientists.

Scottish government

- Scottish parliament.
- Its members are MSPs.

Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC)

scratchcard, smartcard, swipecard

seasons

spring, summer, autumn, winter lowercase.

sex

Try to choose terminology accurately according to what you are writing about. Use 'sex' when referring to the biological aspects of an individual/individuals assigned at birth. Use 'gender' to talk about how people identify (which may not match the sex they were assigned at birth).

The UK government defines sex as:

- referring to the biological aspects of an individual as determined by their anatomy, which is produced by their chromosomes, hormones and their interactions
- generally male or female
- something that is assigned at birth

For a definition see G: [gender](#) see page 6.

silent killer

We no longer use this phrase to describe kidney disease.

singular or plural?

Corporate entities (including charities) take the singular:

- eg NICE has decided (not "have").
- In subsequent references make sure the pronoun is singular: "It [not "they"] supports the NHS antiobesity plans."
- Sports teams and rock bands are the exception: "England have an uphill task" is ok, as is "Take That were not overrated".

spelling

- Where there is more than one way to spell a word (and it's not on this style sheet) refer to the Oxford Dictionary
- British English spellings: use -is spellings, not -iz- (eg idolise, not idolize; realisation, not realization).

statistics

Use UK and worldwide statistics, not US statistics. Refer to marcomms for the latest, referenced kidney statistics.

suffer

Acceptable when talking to the public about the experience of having kidney disease.

T

21st century

But hyphenate if adjectival: newspapers of the 21st century, 21st century newspapers.

tackle

Use as a verb to describe Kidney Research UK's work, eg how we will tackle the causes of kidney disease.

T&Cs

Use instead of terms and conditions.

#TeamKidney

As there is more than one word to read, use title case.

telephone numbers

- Should be used in the 4/5, 3, 4 format eg 0854 070 7601, 01733 367 859
- Mobile numbers should be: 07xxx xxx xxx
- Although phone numbers usually have six digits in a row, it is so much easier for people to read when there is the space in the middle.

temperatures

Just use Celsius temperature: 30C. No need to use the degree symbol (°).

times

2.30pm, 2pm (not 2.00pm)
12 noon (not 12pm) 12 midnight (not 12am) 2hr 30min.

title case

Title case should generally be avoided apart from to describe report titles (see below), or when a hashtag contains multiple words eg #TeamKidney. This is a description of where capital letters are placed on all of the main words in a sentence unless it is a grammatical word, eg: This is the Example; This is Another One. Or: He is a Role Model for Positivity. An alternative to title case is sentence case: This is the example: He is a role model for positivity, where just the first word is capitalised.

Report / document titles. Italicize report documents titles and do not initial upper case. Where we can't italicize due to font restrictions (Wes FY does not have italics), then initial upper case report titles, eg Kidney Disease: A UK Public Health Emergency.

tone of voice

- Positive.
- Tenacity.
- Simplicity.
- Honesty.
- Confidence.

See the Brand Guidelines for more information.

treatments

Use as a catch-all term for dialysis and transplant.

trustee

- Lowercase as a standalone word.

U _____

URL

We always use the www. before a web address.

Where possible use a shortened friendlier link and avoid really long URLs over multiple lines.

V _____

W _____

web, webpage, website, world wide web

wheelchair

Say (if relevant) that someone uses a wheelchair, not that they are “in a wheelchair” or “wheelchair-bound” – stigmatising and offensive, as well as inaccurate.

while

Not whilst.

Will(s)

Document listing who you will leave your possessions to on your death.
Always use a capital W.

X _____

Y _____

Z _____

ordinary ends here.

Kidney Research UK is a limited company registered in England. Registered office: Stuart House, City Road, Peterborough PE1 1QF.
Registered charity no. 252892. Scottish charity no. SC039245. Registered company no. 905963.

Version 3. August 24