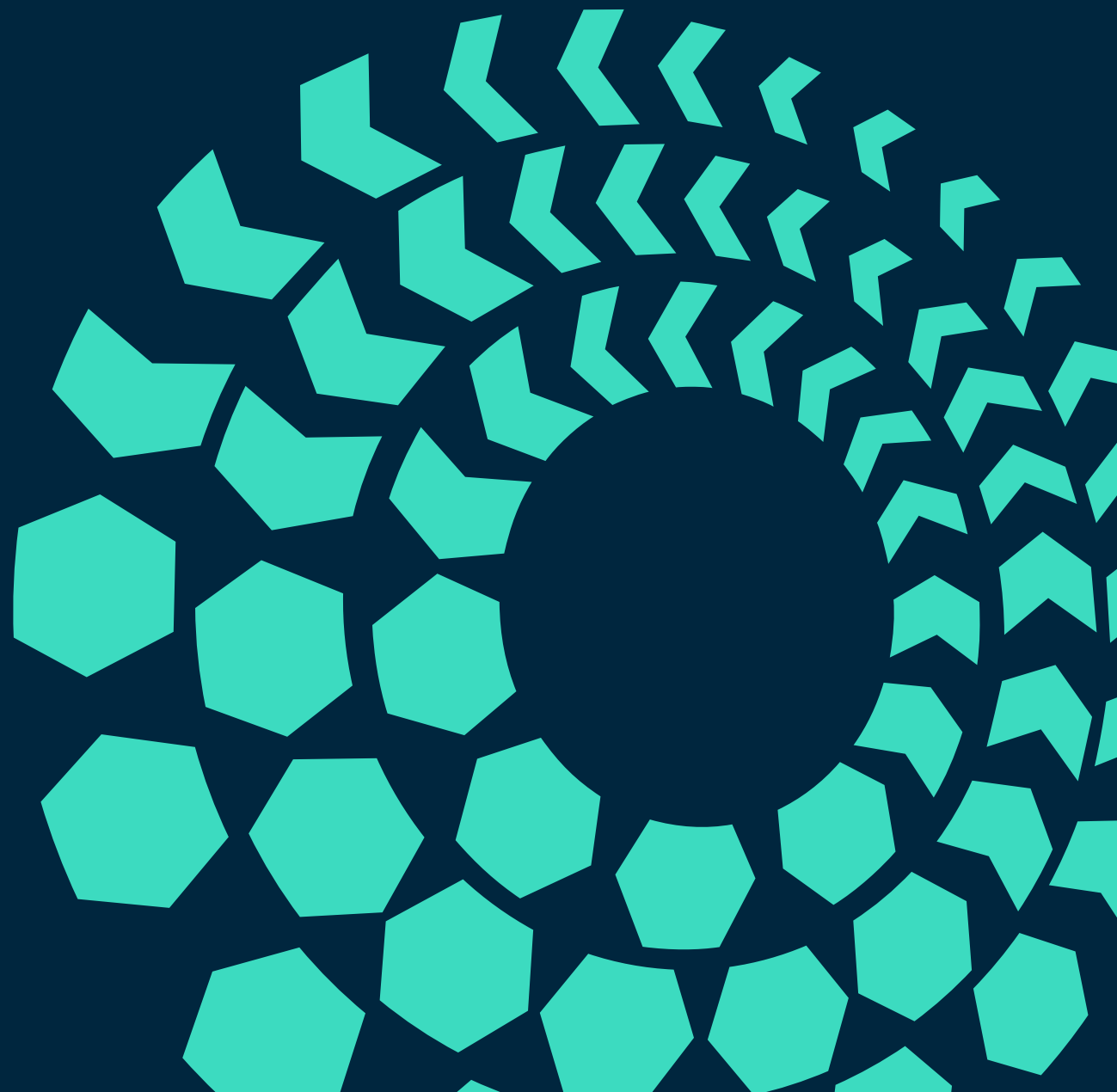# ISEP

Institute of Sustainability &
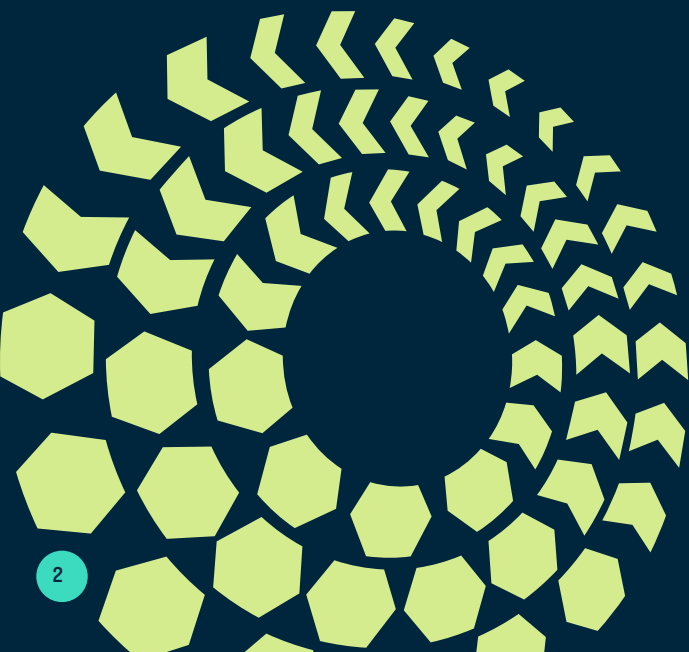Environmental Professionals

Brand Guidelines

APRIL 2025 **DRAFT 5**

CONTENTS

Our guidelines are designed to give you the tools and inspiration you need to create powerful, distinctive and effective communications.

We've outlined the core visual elements that help build a coherent brand across all channels with the flexibility to connect with your audiences.

BRAND POSITIONING

Key pillars
Sustainability, transformation, professional, championing, voice.

Our purpose is
Transforming the world today for a sustainable future.

Together we are
The professional voice on sustainability, helping our members drive environmental and sustainable practices in businesses and societies around the world.

Our approach
We're here for professionals who want to champion change.

Whether it's at the heart of your work, an essential element or you want to get onboard and support change, we enable you with innovative thinking, practice, standards and assessment.

We cover every sector and every level of sustainability, environmental management and assessment, our networks reaching around the world.

How we do this
We do this by leading the way in: Setting the standards in professional environmental and sustainability skills, practice and assessment.

Advancing careers and nurturing talent, share learning, deepen skills, broaden knowledge and accrediting achievement.

Creating collaborations, uniting talent, building partnerships and bridging perspectives to develop fresh ideas and influence stronger, positive policy decisions and legislation.

Voice defined as compelling, inspiring, authoritative, pragmatic.
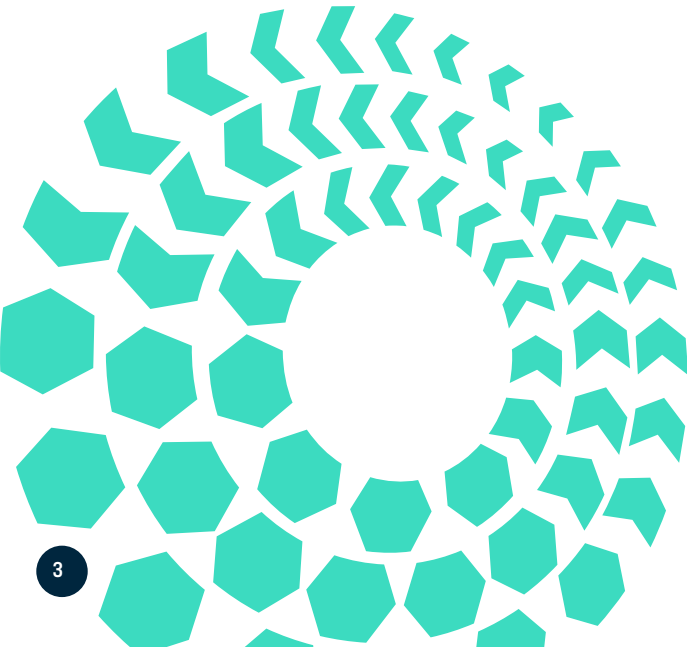
BRAND NARRATIVE

Sustainability matters. Environmentally, economically and socially.

The Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP) is the global membership body for anyone wanting sustainable change that delivers across government, business and society.

By harnessing the collective expertise and experience of our global membership, we set the standard in sustainable leadership, knowledge, skills and practice.

Whether you're an environmental specialist, a sustainability generalist, or just want to be a champion for change in your area – we empower people with cutting-edge evidence and insights, enable with world-class training and guidance, and ensure excellence with unrivalled professional standards and assessment.

We are passionate about uniting talent, creating collaborations and forming networks that influence government policy, drive best-practice within business, and inspire change across society.

No matter what stage you're at in your career or what sector you work in, we can equip you with the skills, standards and support needed to nurture your talent and advance your career.

Join ISEP and become an agent of change, transforming the world today for a sustainable future.

In one sentence - about ISEP members

ISEP members set the benchmark for sustainability and environmental professionals globally – transforming the world today for a sustainable future.

In one sentence - about ISEP (the organisation)

The Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP) is the global membership body that sets the standard for anyone wanting sustainable change that delivers for the environment, society and the economy.

In a few paragraphs

Sustainability matters. Environmentally, economically and socially.

The Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP) is the global membership body for anyone wanting to deliver change for a sustainable future.

ISEP members set the global benchmark in sustainability and environmental practice. Our networks around the world are influencing government policies, driving best-practice across business, advancing careers and nurturing talent.

No matter what stage you're at in your career or what sector you work in, we can equip you with the skills, standards and support you need to become an agent of change.

ISEP is transforming the world today for a sustainable future.
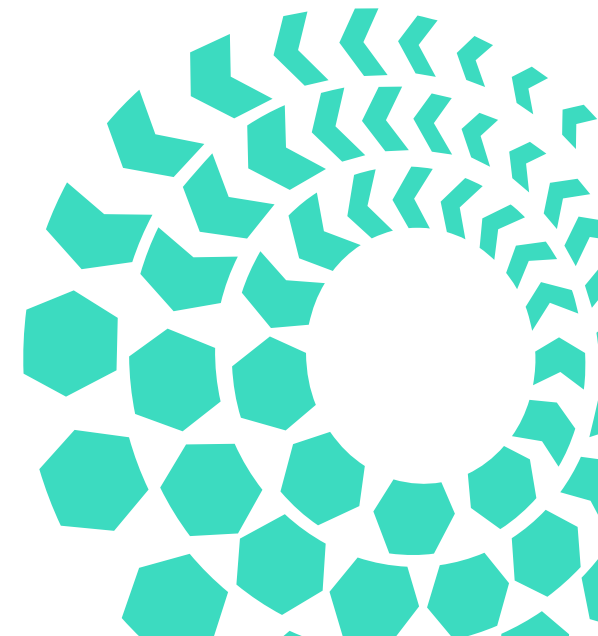
OUR LOGO

Colourways
Our logo is available in a range of options.

Full colour
Use on white or pale backgrounds.

White copy version
Use on deep blue, deep green or black backgrounds.

White
Use on dark backgrounds.

Deep blue
Use on lighter or mid tone backgrounds.

Black
Only to be used when full colour print is unavailable.

File formats
Always reproduce our logo from a master reference.
It's available in the following formats:

EPS/AI Use with professional design applications, such as the Adobe Creative Suite. These vector files can be scaled to any size without losing quality.

JPEG Use with Microsoft software, such as Word and PowerPoint.

PNG/SVG Use for websites, social media and email.

Social media icon
On social media we use the icon separately
from the logotype.

Social media icon
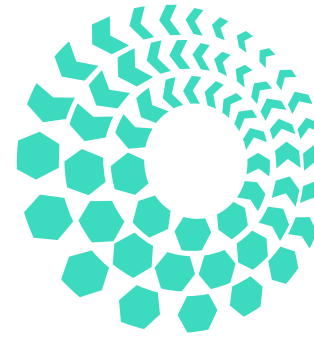
OUR LOGO – FULL NAME

Our full name logo is available in a range of options. This version can be used when greater awareness of our organisation is needed.

Colourways
Our logo is available in a range of options.

Full colour
Use on white or pale backgrounds.

White copy version
Use on deep blue, deep green or black backgrounds.

White
Use on dark backgrounds.

Deep blue
Use on lighter or mid tone backgrounds.

Black
Only to be used when full colour print is unavailable.

File formats
Always reproduce our logo from a master reference.
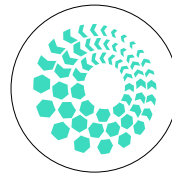It's available in the following formats:

EPS/AI Use with professional design applications, such as the Adobe Creative Suite. These vector files can be scaled to any size without losing quality.

JPEG Use with Microsoft software, such as Word and PowerPoint.

PNG/SVG Use for websites, social media and email.

Social media icon
On social media we use the icon separately from the logotype.

Logo with strapline

BRAND ARCHITECTURE

Our coherent brand architecture has the flexibility to work for all sub-brands, accreditations, policy, regional and global networks.

Artwork files are available in eps, jpeg, svg and png format.

Corporate partnerships

ISEP CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

Regional and global networks

ISEP Midlands

ISEP Yorkshire & Humberside

ISEP India

ISEP Middle East & North Africa
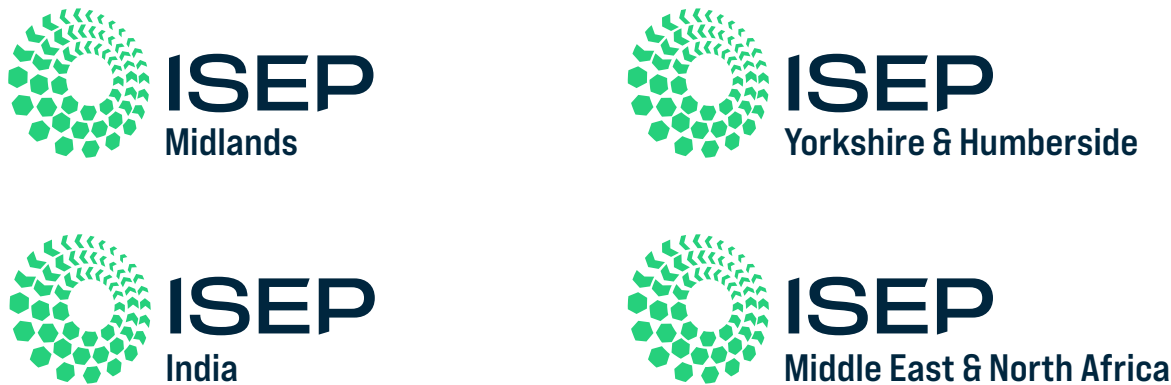
Policy and other networks

ISEP Impact Assessment

ISEP Climate Change Mitigation & Adaptation

Badges

ISEP RECRUITMENT PARTNER

ISEP UNIVERSITY PARTNER

ISEP CORPORATE PARTNER

ISEP EIA QUALITY MARK

ISEP TRAINING CENTRE

ISEP APPROVED

ISEP CERTIFIED

LOGO SIZES, CLEAR SPACE AND PLACEMENT

Logo sizes
Recommended logo sizes are shown opposite, these are just a guide. These are referenced to the width of the logo. Reduce or enlarge proportionately for different formats.

Clear space
Keep the area around the logo free from straplines, text or graphics. The minimum clear space recommendation is half the width of the letter 'E' in our logotype.

Placement
Logo placement is dependent on the media you choose. It can be placed in any corner of the screen, page or environment. It can also be centred.

Ensure there is good accessibility with any background colours, graphic shapes or images.

Logo sizing – guidance only
Minimum size 150 pixels, 20mm

Clear space – 50% width

Placement suggestions

COLOUR PALETTE

Our colour palette is inspired by nature. Our two core colours are supported by six complementary shades.

Our teal and deep blue should have prominence on everything you create.

Choose colours based on the tone and messages you need to convey. Use them with purpose to enhance and promote your communications. Minimal colour usage can often have the strongest visual impact.

Our colours can work as solid backgrounds or accent colours to highlight key information. Avoid using tints and gradients.

On screen colours (HEX, RGB) will always vary slightly compared to printed colours (CMYK).

Accessibility
Your colour choices will be dependent on the media, size and content. As a guide, the best colours for small copy (i.e. 8-12 point) on a white background are black, deep blue, and deep green. Deep blue or black copy on teal, lime, green, mauve and light mauve backgrounds also work well.

Please refer to page 11 for further accessible colour recommendations and options.

TEAL
HEX #3CDBC0
RGB 60 219 192
CMYK 54, 0, 34, 0
Pantone 333

DEEP BLUE
HEX #00263E
RGB 0 38 62
CMYK 100, 40, 0, 82
Pantone 2965

LIME
HEX #D4EC8E
RGB 212 236 142
CMYK 15, 0, 53, 0
Pantone 372

GREEN
HEX #26D07C
RGB 38 208 124
CMYK 64, 0, 71, 0
Pantone 7479

DEEP GREEN
HEX #004851
RGB 0 72 81
CMYK 100, 10, 29, 68
Pantone 316

MAUVE
HEX #6191B4
RGB 97 145 180
CMYK 62, 28, 7, 4
Pantone 2148

LIGHT MAUVE
HEX #B8CCEA
RGB 184 204 234
CMYK 25, 12, 0, 0
Pantone 2708

MID GREEN
HEX #007864
**RGB** 0 120 100
CMYK 100, 0, 61, 28
Pantone 3295

COLOUR COMBINATIONS

The colours within our palette are designed to work together. They can be used individually or in combinations of two or three colours.

Some recommended options are shown opposite. **This is not definitive,** as your final choices will be dependent on the design elements, media and content you are communicating.

Try combining darker and lighter tones to create contrast, perspective and impact. Use them with purpose to aid navigation, highlight key information and add impact. From a bold background to a subtle accent colour.

A translucent overlay style can be achieved by using the multiply effect in Adobe. This creates subtle interactions between graphics, images and areas of colour.
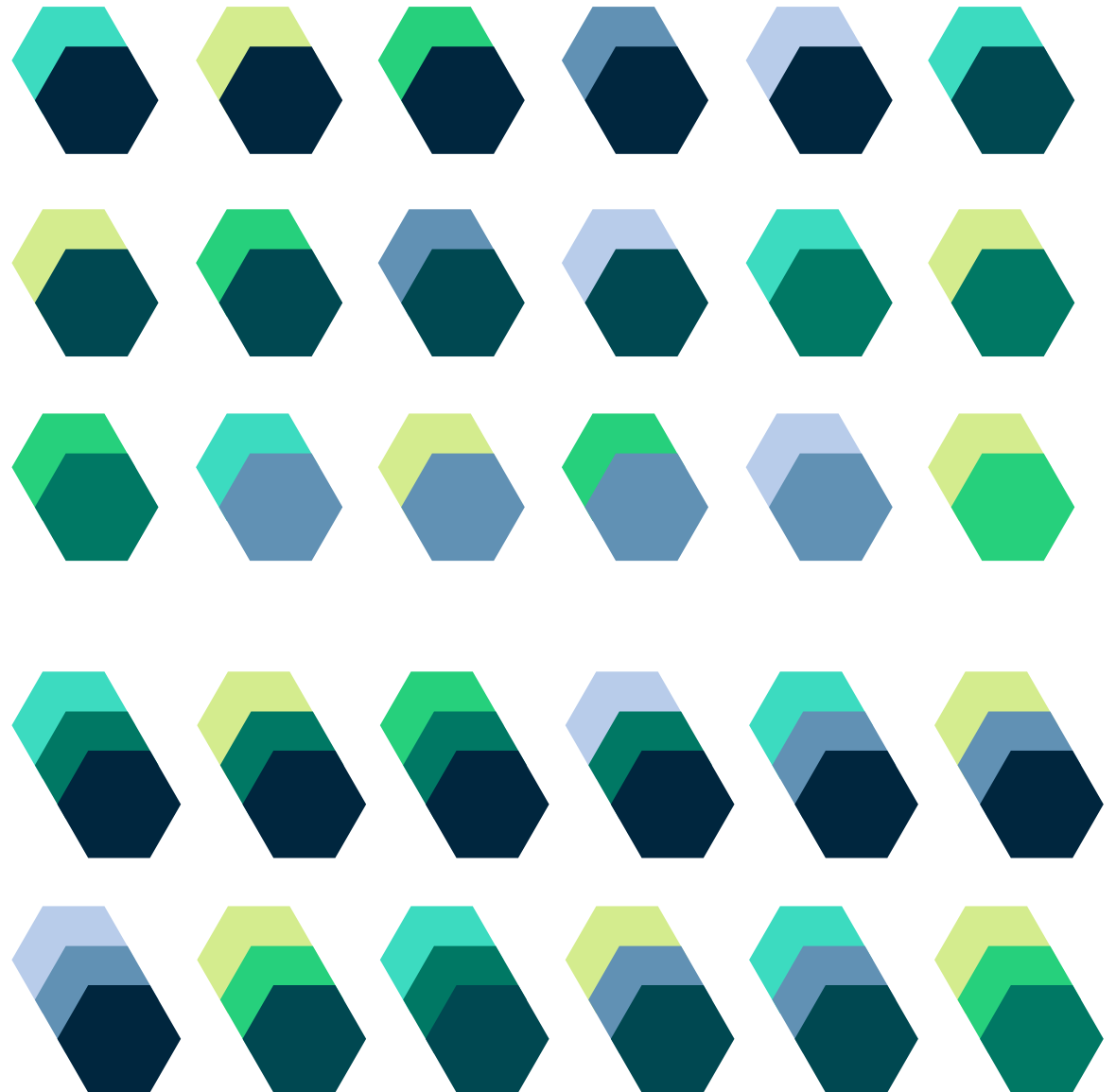
Brand elements

COLOUR CONTRAST

Our colour palette has been chosen for its distinctive personality and flexibility across communications.

Some recommended colour choices for copy are shown opposite. These are a guide only and are dependent on font weight, copy length, size and the environment in which it appears.

The most accessible colours (WCAG) for large amounts of body copy (8-12pt) are shown below.

Further options for typographic emphasis, short amounts of copy, headlines and larger type are shown opposite.

Small copy colour suggestions
WCAG AAA (on white backgrounds or reversed)
Deep blue
Deep green
Black

Other combinations for small copy (AA)
Teal and deep green/deep blue
Lime and deep green/deep blue
Green and deep green/deep blue
Light mauve and deep green/deep blue
Mid green on white

The WCAG colour guidelines are designed for screen based media. But they can be used as a reference guide for print based media.

TEAL
HEX #3CDBC0

HEX 00263E
HEX 007864
HEX 004851

DEEP BLUE
HEX #00263E

HEX 3CDBC0
HEX D4EC8E
HEX 26D07C
HEX B8CCEA
HEX 6191B4

LIME
HEX #D4EC8E

HEX 00263E
HEX 007864
HEX 004851

GREEN
HEX #26D07C

HEX 00263E
HEX 004851

DEEP GREEN
HEX #004851

HEX D4EC8E
HEX 3CDBC0
HEX B8CCEA

MAUVE
HEX #6191B4

HEX 00263E
HEX 004851

LIGHT MAUVE
HEX #B8CCEA

HEX 00263E
HEX 004851

MID GREEN
HEX #007864

HEX D4EC8E
HEX 3CDBC0
HEX B8CCEA

TYPEFACES

Primary typeface – Bebas Neue Pro Expanded
Bebas Neue Pro Expanded is our primary typeface. It has been chosen for its distinctive and accessible characteristics.

It's available in a variety of weights from Light to Extra Bold to give you typographic flexibility.

Usage
Bebas Neue Pro is used for all externally commissioned and professionally designed materials. These include social media, video, reports, websites and promotional materials.

Bebas Neue Pro is available from:
myfonts.com
fonts.adobe.com

System typeface – Calibri
Calibri is our Microsoft Office system typeface.

Usage
Calibri is used for our internally produced materials. These can include Word templates, PowerPoint presentations, forms, letters and email signatures.

TRANSFORMING
the world today for a sustainable future

Primary Display typeface

Bebas Neue Pro Expanded Light
Bebas Neue Pro Expanded Book
Bebas Neue Pro Expanded Middle
Bebas Neue Pro Expanded Regular
Bebas Neue Pro Expanded Bold
Bebas Neue Pro Expanded Extra Bold

System typeface

Calibri Light
Calibri Regular
Calibri Bold

TYPOGRAPHY

This is for guidance only as your type choices will depend on your content and channels.

Headings
Bebas Neue Pro Expanded Bold and Extra Bold. Sentence case or capitals.

A lighter weight can also be used to add contrast. Always consider the most appropriate words or phrases to emphasise with the bolder weight.

Body copy
Bebas Neue Pro Expanded Regular, Book or Middle. Sentence case.

Sub headings
Bebas Neue Pro Expanded Bold or Extra Bold. They can also be a larger size (or contrasting colour) to enhance navigation. Sentence case is recommended.

Emphasis
Any appropriate weight (or contrasting colour) can be used for typographic emphasis and quotes.

Capitals
Capitals can be used for headlines, shorter headings, typographic emphasis and key facts that require impact. Large amounts of capitals should be avoided.

Emphasis – Regular and Extra Bold

CHAMPION
CHANGE

Headline – Extra Bold and Regular

Transforming
the world today for
a sustainable future

Quote – Bebas Neue Pro bold

"Rapid growth in demand for green jobs and green skills in these sectors is evidence of growing demand in the wider economy."

Quote credit in Bold and Regular

Body copy – Regular

Sub heading example in bold

We're here for professionals who want to champion change. Whether it's at the heart of your work, an essential element or you want to get onboard and support change, we enable you with innovative thinking, practice, standards and assessment.

We cover every sector and every level of sustainability, environmental management and assessment, our networks reaching around the world.

For copy emphasis try using a bolder weight or contrasting colour from our palette.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Our photography style is **transforming the world today.**
It celebrates the synergy of people and planet.

Humanity
Every image should tell a story. They capture the diversity of our members and sectors. The sharing of ideas, collaborations, innovation and impact. Images are never static or posed, they focus on moments of interaction and inspiration.

The world
Our planet and industry focussed images explore metaphorical concepts of transformation, synergy, positive change and influence. Diverse textures, perspectives and organic or human-made patterns. From evocative images of murmuration and kelp forests to aerial and macro details.

Safeguarding and best practice
Approval and permissions must be obtained in advance and our consent procedure should always be followed.

Copyright
All imagery shown are for visual representation only.
If you are planning to use a particular image ensure you have permission from the copyright holder.

Stock examples: gettyimages.co.uk, istockphoto.com

Brand elements
ICONOGRAPHY

Our distinctive and versatile illustrative icon style visually connects with our core logo.

Using icons
Our icons can help promote information across all channels. Use them to aid navigation, enhance data and build dynamic infographics.

They can also illustrate specific subject areas when photography isn't easily available.

Colour
Use our brand colour palette to create your icons. Ensure there is good contrast with the background to enhance accessibility.

Creating Icons
Follow our style when creating new icons – they must work as a coherent set. They are created from the core shapes within our logo.

Keep our icons as simple as possible. Use universal metaphors so people can easily understand their function and meaning.

Avoid creating complex or detailed icons if they need to appear at small sizes. Consider the platform on which they will be viewed – from a simple navigation icon on a mobile device to a more detailed animated infographic style for a promotional video.

File formats
A range of icons are available in eps, jpeg and svg formats.

INNOVATIVE THINKING,
PRACTICE, STANDARDS
& ASSESSMENT

ISEP

8%
INCREASE
IN GREEN JOBS
FROM 2023-2024
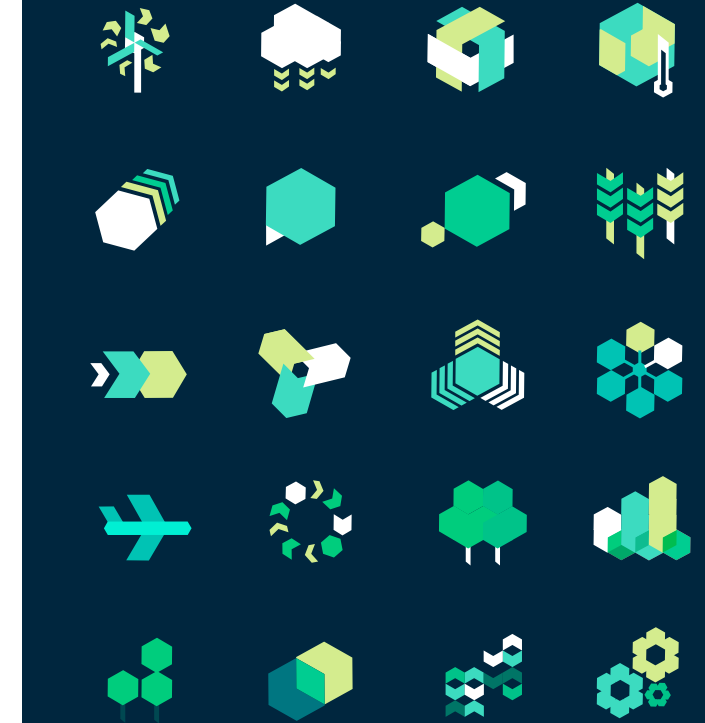
PATTERNS

We have a range of dynamic patterns that can be used across all our communications. Use them to suggest drive, unity, change and influence.

They are created from the four core shapes in our logo. Avoid overlapping the elements or using too many colours, keep it clean and simple for maximum impact. We have pre designed a selection of patterns, as shown on this page.

INSTITUTE OF SUSTAINABILITY
& ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONALS

Posts

ISEP

Sustainable futures report **2025**

25,000 likes
@ISEP We believe that together we're positively changing attitudes to sustainability as a progressive force for good.
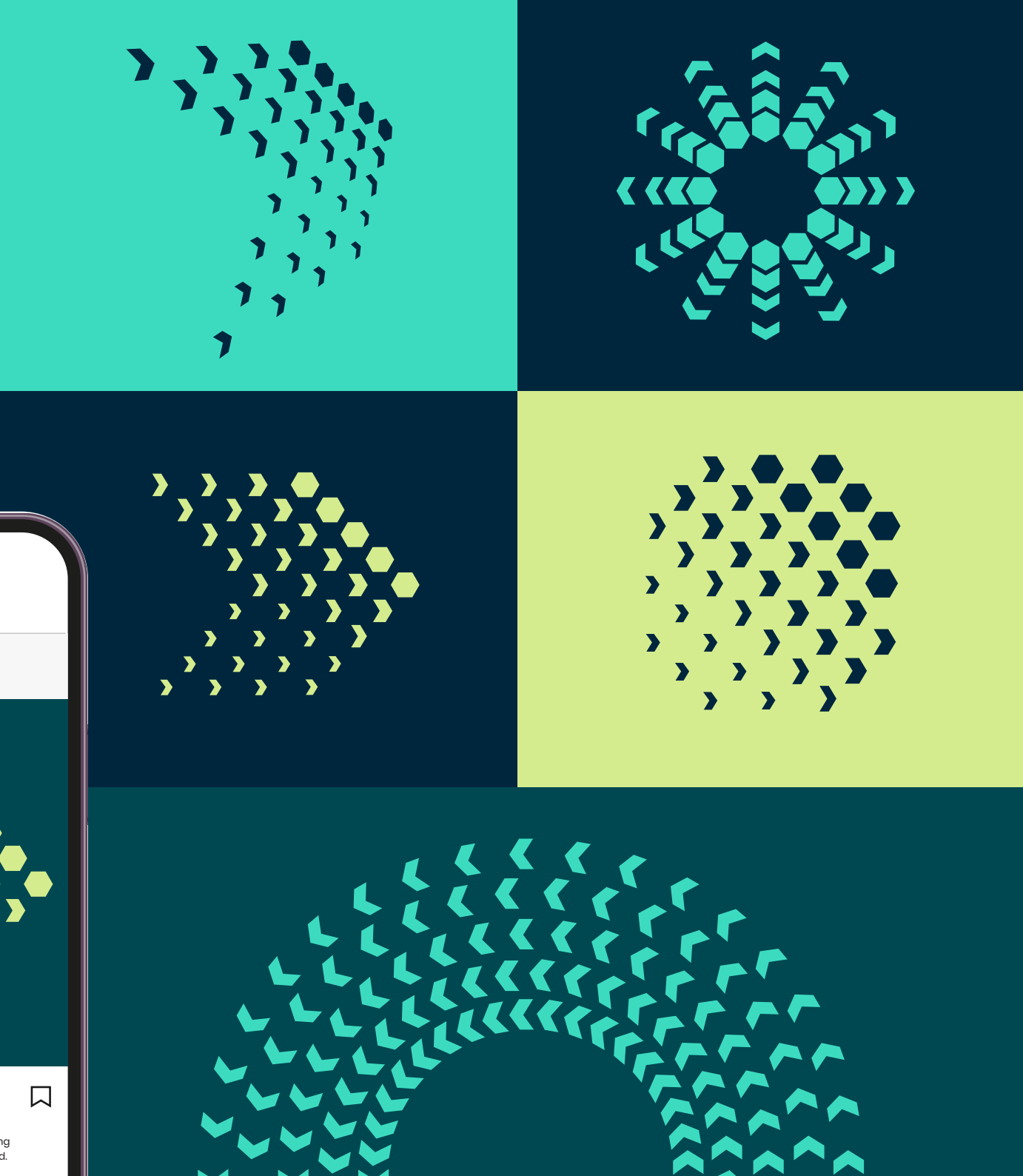
OUR VISUAL SYSTEM

Our visual system is versatile enough to support you whatever medium you choose. From web to promotional videos, events to reports.

The following pages illustrate how our visual system can be used to enhance our impact, raise awareness and inspire change.
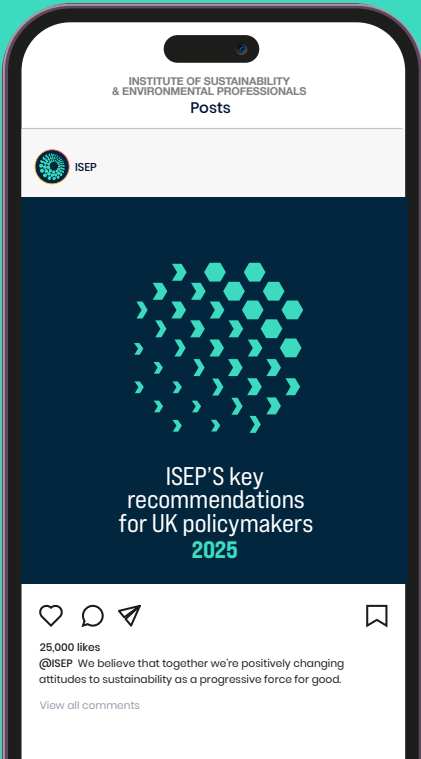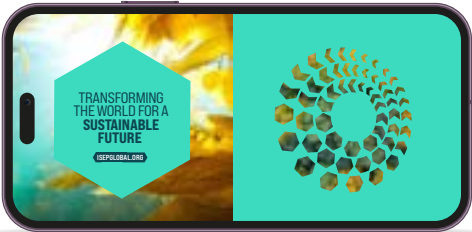
OUR ICON

Our core logo icon forms the basis for our visual system. Use our icon to create a sense of movement, collaboration, transformation or balance.

It can integrate, frame, direct, create focus and amplify our communications.

The three radiating circles that create our core icon can be used together or individually. They can be cropped, overlayed and filled with images.

Colour and style guidance

Our icon can use any colour from our palette. Always consider the crop of the shape and how it will interact and enhance our images and messaging. Its placement should always feel intuitive and connected. When working with dual images ensure they work together in colour, story or subject matter.

INSTITUTE OF SUSTAINABILITY
& ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONALS

Posts

ISEP

INNOVATIVE
THINKING

25,000 likes
@ISEP We believe that together we're positively changing attitudes to sustainability as a progressive force for good.
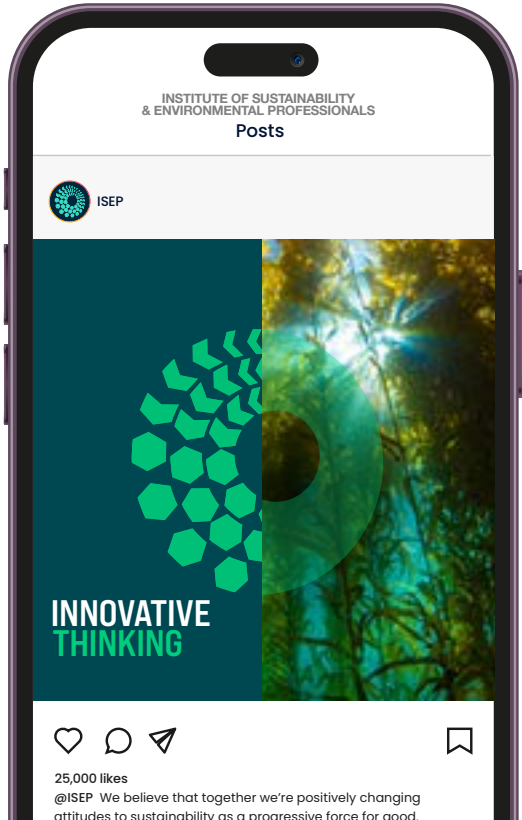
Frame

Overlay

Background

Circle combination

Dual image

Single image

Connector
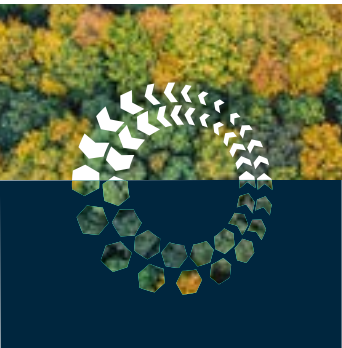
Single image, two ring circle

Dual image, two ring circle

CORE ELEMENTS

The individual shapes that create our core icon can be used to frame, segment, animate and create infographics or patterns.

Core elements
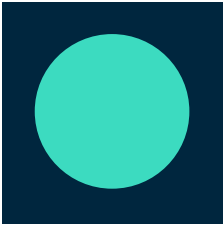Our four shapes are derived from our logo.

Arrow

Wide arrow

Hexagon

Circle

Cropped examples

Linear

Underline

Momentum
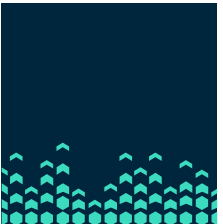
Movement

Overlay

Transform
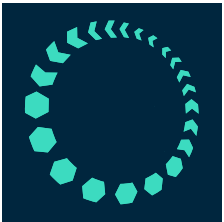
Radiate
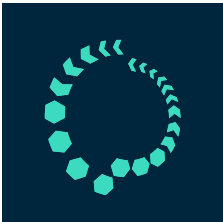
Connect
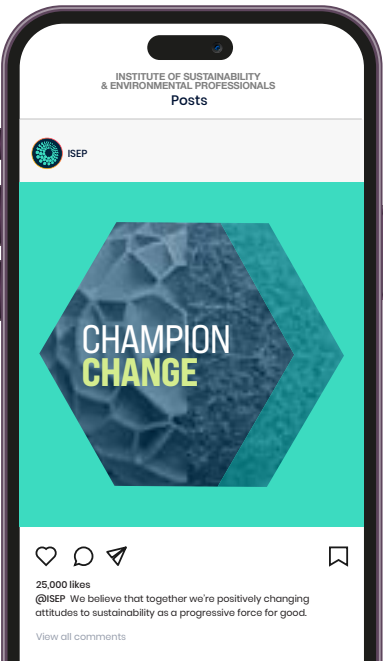
BEST PRACTICE

Our visual system has great flexibility across all your communications but it's important we get the balance right. Use the following guidance when designing with our visual system.
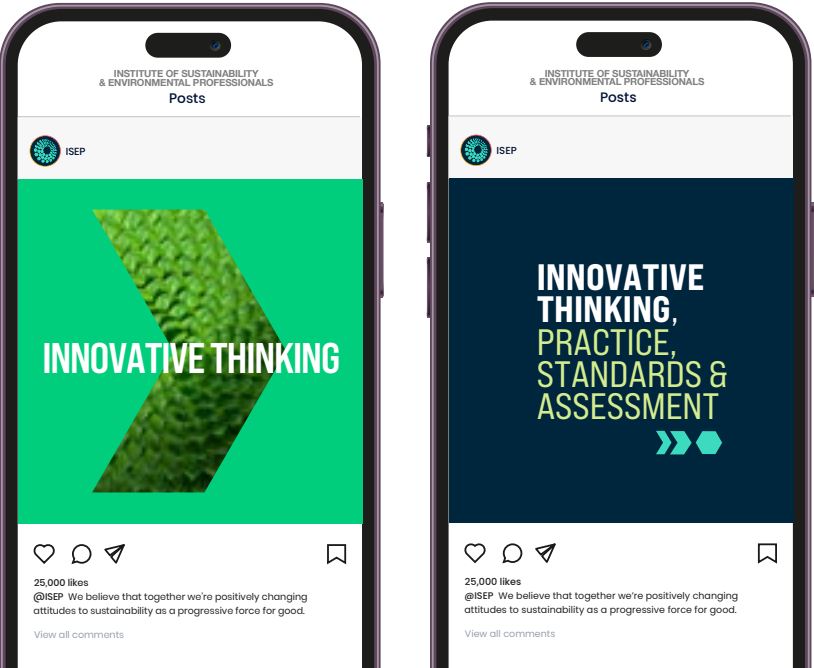
Element sizing
The elements can be resized proportionately.
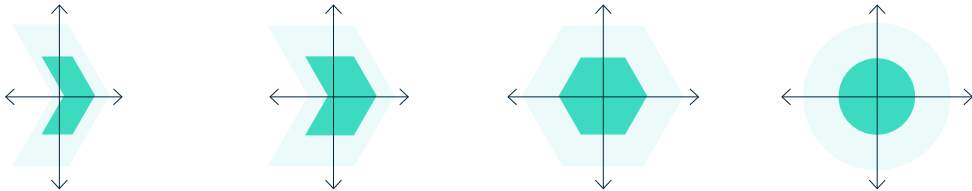
Element rotation
The elements can be rotated.

Stretch
The arrow and hexagon elements can be elongated to create a keyline or holding device.
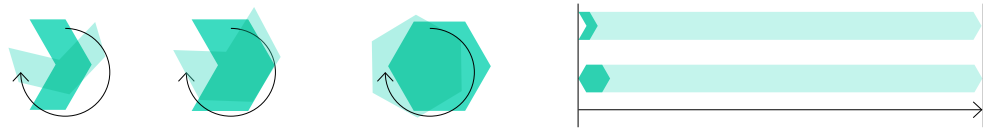
Overlap
The shapes can overlay and interact.

INSTITUTE OF SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONALS
Posts

ISEP

INNOVATIVE THINKING

25,000 likes
@ISEP We believe that together we're positively changing attitudes to sustainability as a progressive force for good.

View all comments

INSTITUTE OF SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONALS
Posts

ISEP

INNOVATIVE THINKING, PRACTICE, STANDARDS & ASSESSMENT

25,000 likes
@ISEP We believe that together we're positively changing attitudes to sustainability as a progressive force for good.

View all comments

BEST PRACTICE

Use with purpose
Connect with an action point in an image. Or use the elements or direct the audience towards key data, headlines and quotes.

Overlay
You can create a more intuitive interaction with photography by varying the opacity of our icon and core elements.

Colour
Choose colours from our palette that enhance your imagery, tone and content.

Less is more
Our visual system is distinctive enough to be used minimally on everything from social media posts to membership campaigns.

Top tips
Ensure our graphics are used coherently and with a sense of purpose. Communicate don't decorate.

Transparency effects
When overlaying our elements on images, use the Adobe 'multiply' effect. Or use a 70-90% opacity to ensure the image remains visible.

Multiply

70-90% opacity

Illustration and data visualisation
Use our brand elements creatively to illustrate data and key subjects.

Frame images
Use our shapes to hold images. Ensure the subject matter is appropriate for the chosen shape.

Headline content

Headline content

Frame headlines and copy
Use our shapes to create accessible backgrounds that enhance our messages.

Icon cut-out
Our metaphorical images work well in this style. Ensure the context of the image is not lost.

Overlay
Use our icon and core elements to create distinctive overlays. Their placement should feel collaborative, connected, supportive or inspiring. They should never feel intrusive.

Dual images
Use our core icon to create a dynamic interaction with images and solid colour.

WHAT TO AVOID

It's important we get the balance right to create a coherent and powerful visual system.

Here are some things to consider:
Communicate don't decorate. Use our system to interact, enhance and connect with images and language. It should never overpower, obscure or feel intrusive.

Only use colours from our palette and please choose them carefully. Less is more.

Simplicity
Avoid 3D, gradient, outlines and drop shadow effects.
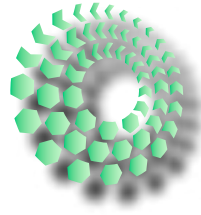
Consistent
Do not change the colour of our icon within the full logo.

Balance
Maintain balance and connection between our radiating circles.
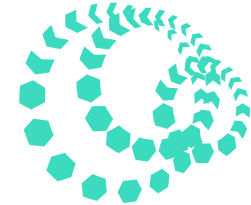
Maintain proportions
Don't distort our core shapes
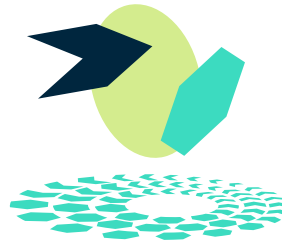
Focus
Only use one or two key images to help capture the audience's attention.

Continuity
Don't add any new colours.
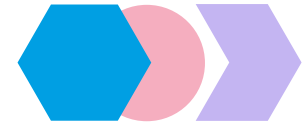
Minimal
Avoid excessive use of our system elements and colours.

Placement
Avoid obscuring faces key areas of an image.

Connected
Our visual system should never feel disconnected or random.

REPORTS

Our reports bring together the elements from our visual system. Our templates can work with and without images.

Headings
We recommend titles use Bebas Neue Pro Expanded Bold or Extra Bold, sub headings can use Regular or Bold. Uppercase or lowercase.

Colour
Always ensure our type is clear and accessible with good contrast. Choose colours from our palette that compliment the images and messaging.

Alternative colourways
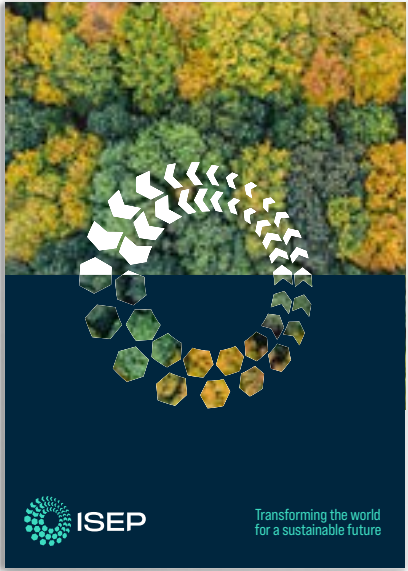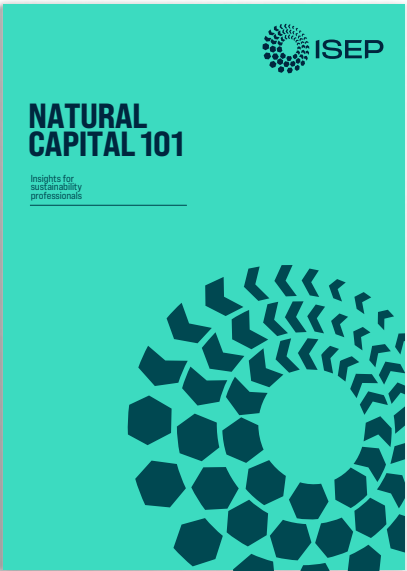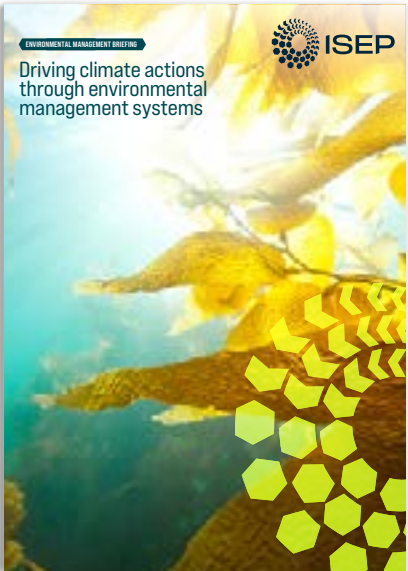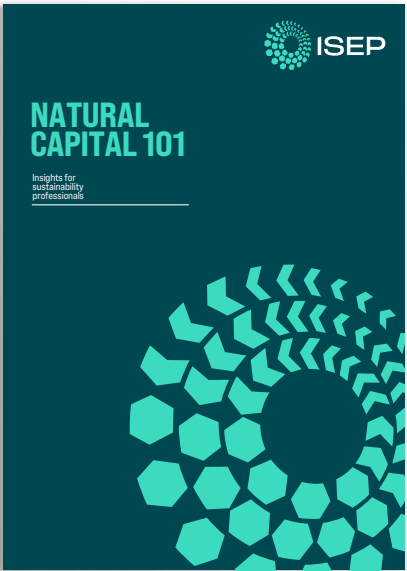
LAYOUTS

Use our visual system to highlight key information and content levels.

Colour
Colours from our palette are used to codify different content levels, enhance navigation and for data visualisation.

Ensure colour usage is minimal and coherent.

Templates
A range of templates have been developed for reports.

Section dividers and
key overview pages

Use colour to enhance navigation and flow.

Headings use different weights and colour to create impact.

Hexagon linear underline segments content levels.

Hexagon or circle elements highlight page numbers.

Colour and our elements create accessible backgrounds and add impact to facts and key data.

LAYOUTS

Headings
Bebas Neue Pro Expanded Bold or Extra Bold

Body copy
Bebas Neue Pro Expanded Book, Middle or Regular. Recommended minimum type size 10-12pt.

Deep blue or black copy (on white backgrounds) is recommended. Page 11 shows some alternative accessible colour combinations.

Data visualisation
Charts, tables, graphs and infographics use any appropriate weight of Bebas Neue Pro Expanded.

Typographic emphasis
Any appropriate weight or colour can be used for typographic emphasis, key insights and quotes.

Uppercase
Headings and key data that require impact can appear in uppercase. However, excessive use of capitals should be avoided.

Section dividers and
key overview pages

Use colour or heavier
weights to add emphasis.

Highlight key information
with colour frames.
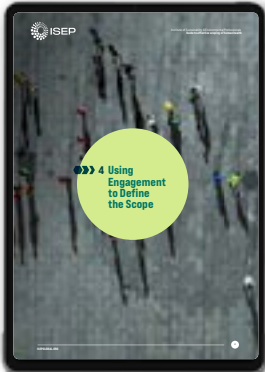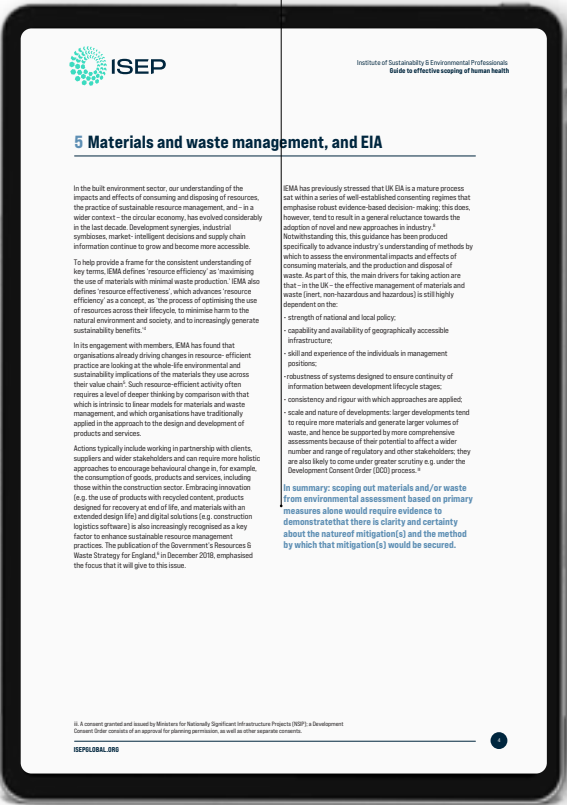
Use our elements to create
supporting icons and infographics.

POWERPOINT

PowerPoint presentations should be visually engaging as well as consistently designed in order to project our messages effectively.

Some example PowerPoint templates are shown opposite.

Plan your presentation around a few key, clear messages per slide. Use the divider slides to create pace. It is better to edit your copy or spread information over multiple slides to engage audiences.

When using imagery, make sure it is relevant to the content of the slide.

Bebas Neue Pro Expanded is our PowerPoint typeface.

Accessibility

We have a set of accessibility guidelines that should be followed when creating presentations. This can be supplied on request.
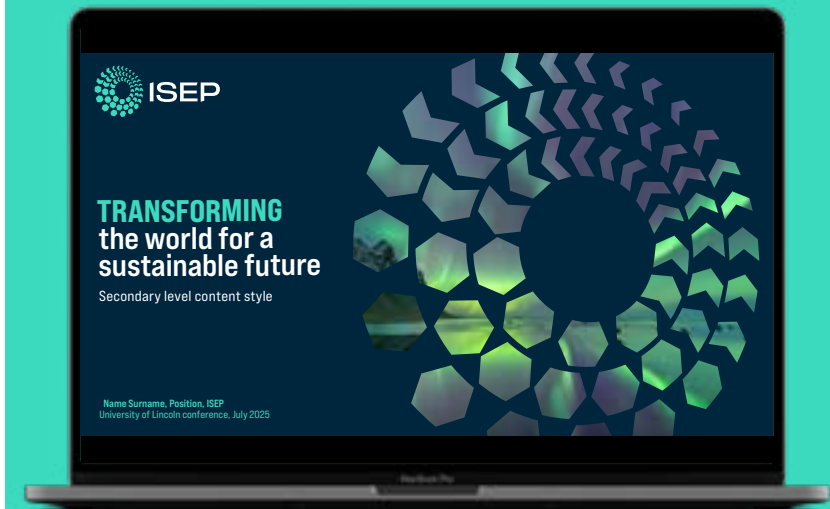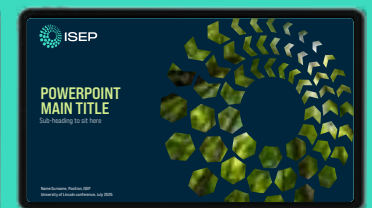
Visual system
VIDEO

Moving images are powerful tools to help us connect, engage and share our content. We have created a coherent and distinctive style for videos. Ensure the brand is used consistently for captions, opening and end frames.

Opening and end frames
Ensure our logo is always clearly visible on our opening and end frames.

Always ensure there is a clear call to action on the end frame with our web address.

Captions
Our captioning style uses Bebas Neue Pro Expanded Bold and Regular. It expands to contain longer titles.
Use colours from our palette that are accessible on the background footage.

Video caption
Video caption
Video caption
Video caption
Video caption
Video caption
Video caption
Longer video captioning style

Captions can be extended to hold longer titles.

ANIMATION

Animation can help bring our brand to life.

Our visual system has a sense of momentum which naturally lends itself to animation. Use our visual system to amplify, connect and transform. Our brand elements can reveal and transition between footage and messaging to guide the viewer.

Radiating network
Elements rotate and zoom out to reveal our logo.
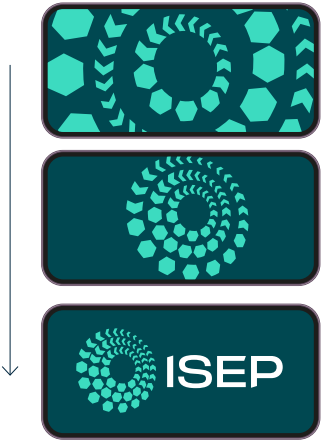
Transform
Elements connect together and form our logo.
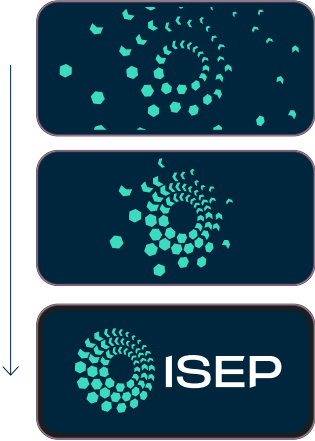
Transition

Data visualisation

Highlight

Visual system

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a key channel for our brand, so it is important that we project a coherent style.

Use our brand elements to create engaging and powerful content. From animated infographics to films that tell the amazing stories of professionals championing change.
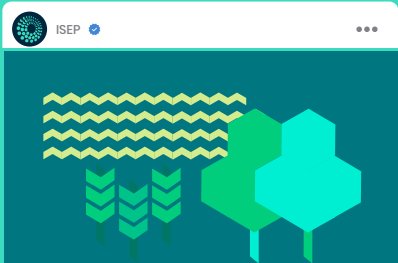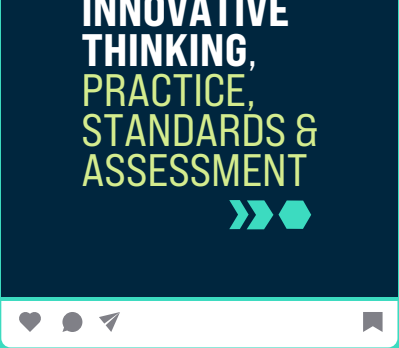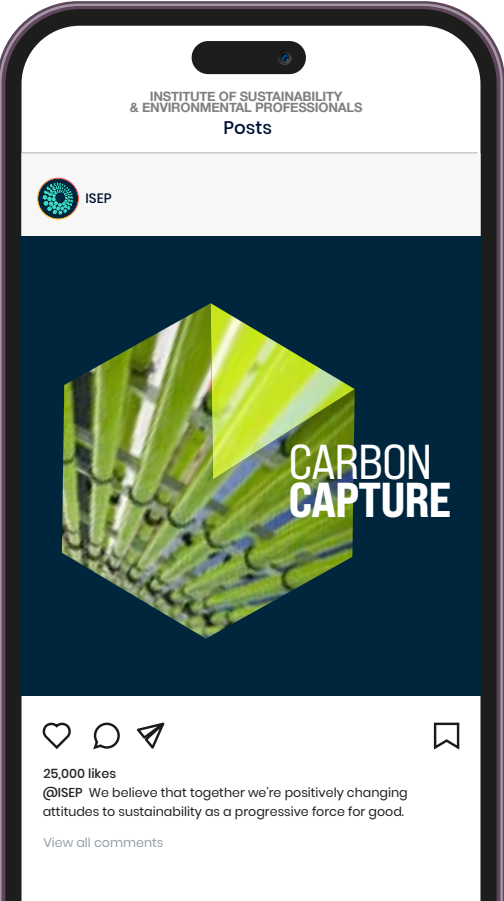
EVENTS

Our visual system has great flexibility and visual impact for events and conferences.

Use our visual system and brand elements to create powerful and distinctive communications.
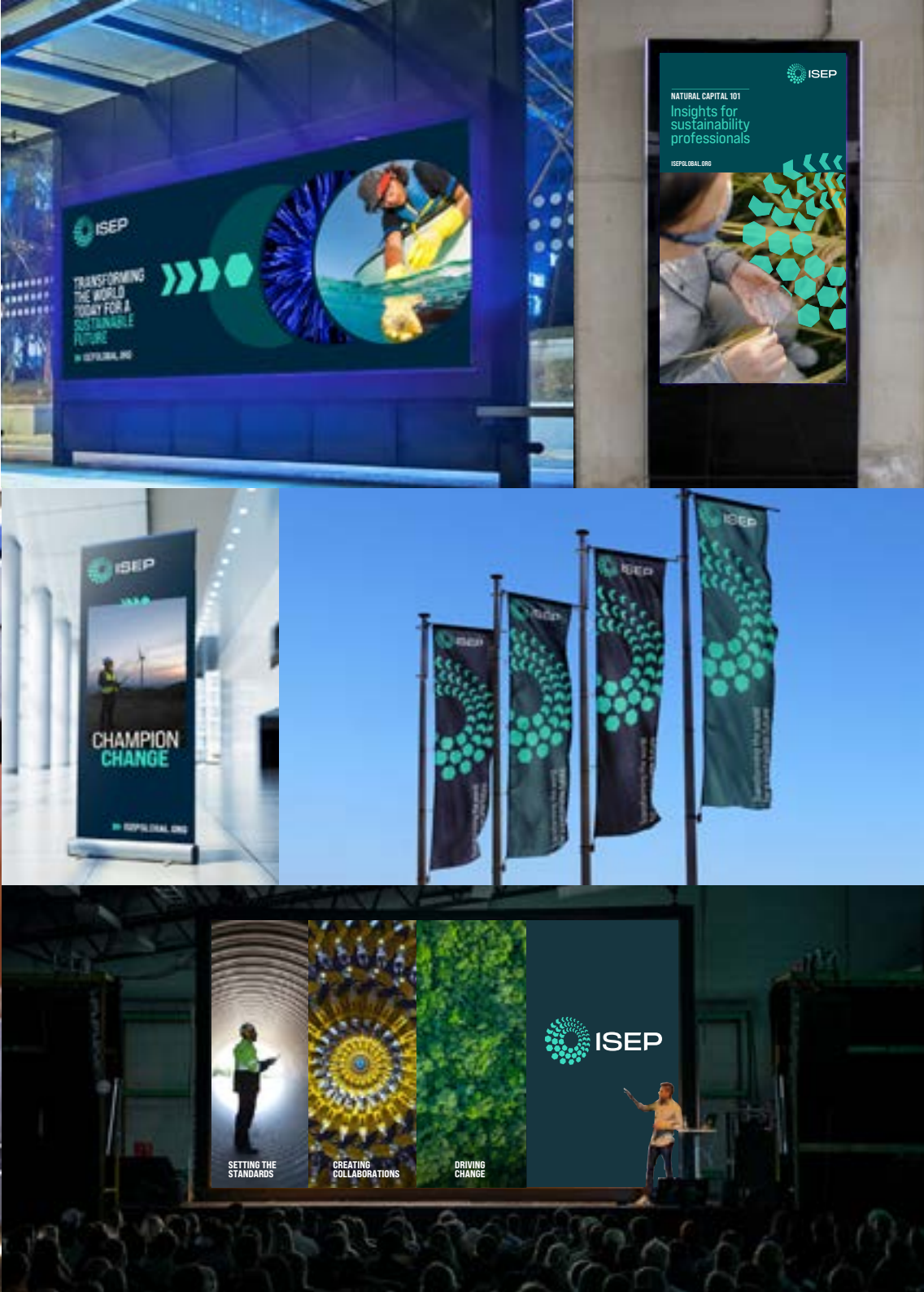
TONE OF VOICE
AND STYLE GUIDELINES

TONE OF VOICE AND STYLE GUIDELINES

This guide aims to help you write copy that's **simple, engaging,** and **professional,** and has been split into two sections: tone of voice (pages 33-34), and style guidance (pages 35-66).

Words: our most powerful asset

Our words are our most powerful asset, and every word is a statement of who we are and what we do.

They enable us to **influence**, **persuade**, and **inform** members and non-members; driving the policy agenda, forming new partnerships, and cementing ISEP as an authoritative voice for the sustainability profession.

In a nutshell, our reputation is dependent on the words we use, and can ensure that the work we do is accessible to everyone.

This isn't a rule book

This tone of voice guide is not intended to be a set of hard and fast rules. We trust you to choose your words wisely.

It is simply here to help create a common thread through the language and tone we use. We don't want to create an army of ISEP robots. We want you to own your creativity within the framework of the guidance.

Think of this guide as your gateway to simple, inclusive communication that is easy to understand for the reader and removes any doubt around the core purpose of ISEP.

"The writer who breeds more words than he needs, is making a chore for the reader who reads", Dr Seuss.

Stand out from the crowd

We work in a thriving sector that is spearheading efforts to create a sustainable environment, economy and society. As in any lively sector, this brings a lot of **noise**. The language we choose helps to differentiate ourselves in the market and demonstrates who we are, what we do, and how we can help them.

Consistency is key. If we're inconsistent in our communications, it will make it harder for people to trust and believe what we say. **Be consistent** and **clear** in emails, reports, news releases, blogs, articles, comments and on social media.

We can be the independent voice of authority for the sustainability profession, but we all need to play our part in telling that story.

"One day I will find the right words, and they will be simple", Jack Kerouac.

TONE OF VOICE AND STYLE GUIDELINES

Cut the jargon, ditch the formalities, and use language people understand.

Always write in plain English that is **confident**, **clear** and **concise**, without losing sight of ISEP's core purpose.

When trying to tell a story or convey a message, always consider the first things you would think of when explaining it to a friend or family member. Get to the key points as quickly as possible.

For example, when explaining what ISEP do, instead of this (previously written on our site): "Belonging gives us the knowledge, connections and authority to lead collective change. We are the professional organisation at the centre of the sustainability agenda, connecting business and individuals across industries, sectors and borders."

Try: "ISEP is the world's largest membership body for sustainability and environment professionals. We provide training, accreditation and guidance for anyone working towards sustainability."

Use **short**, **sharp** sentences, and utilise **bullet points** instead of long-winded sentences if you feel it gets the message across more clearly.

We are a professional body

Although we want to ditch the jargon and be clear in our language, we must remember that we are a **professional body** first and foremost, so slang and unusual abbreviations are not appropriate.

However, use the kind of language you'd use if you were talking to a person face-to-face and be sure to make your language accessible – don't treat everyone as being 'in the know'.

We believe that everyone globally – no matter their background or geography – should be able to understand what and how we do things, why we're doing it, and what we're trying to say; so, it's essential that the language we use is as clear and insightful as possible.

For example, instead of: "The DESNZ requested ISEP's technical expertise for a consultation on energy efficiency measures in consumer dwellings."

Try: "We responded to a government consultation on the effectiveness of heat pumps and insulation in UK homes."

We can't get around the fact that sometimes we must use technical language and that some terms have nuanced meanings. But we can always be precise about exactly what we mean and help people who aren't familiar with the subject.

You could say...	Why not try...
Assistance	Help
However	But
Ensure	Make sure
Commence	Start
In order to	To
Query	Question
Utilise	Use
Request	Ask
Obtain	Get
Advise	Tell
Attempt	Try
Frequently	Often
Modify	Change
Commented	Said

TONE OF VOICE AND STYLE GUIDELINES

Remember:

- Our focus when writing is to be easily understood. For example, it is ok to start sentences with 'but' or 'because', and end on 'to' or 'with' if it makes for better understanding.

- Don't be afraid to use globally recognised phrases and words, that will avoid causing unnecessary confusion – we are not poets.

- Read your sentences aloud after writing – if you're running out of breath or it feels like a word salad, your audiences will also feel that way.

Top tip: Read your writing out loud. Does it sound like something you'd say? If it doesn't, your choice of words and/or phrases could be to blame…

Ultimately, we're a talented group of passionate, confident communicators with deep expertise in our sector, speaking with 'one voice' and using words like "we" and "our".

The fundamentals:

- We are clear and concise in all our communications.

- We write for people of all different backgrounds and experiences.

- We engage personally, not as a corporation.

- We are inspiring, not unexciting.

- We convey our mission, (our why, how and what) in all we say and do.

- We own what we say.

Style guide

The purpose of this style guide is to provide guidance to ISEP colleagues and ensure consistency across all written communications.

Important: Always spell and grammar check your written proposal prior to submitting (Hint: to do this quickly, press F7). Please also ensure that your default language is set to English (UK).

Before we begin, a note on who we are

In all written communications we refer to ourselves as the "Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP)" first and then "the Institute" if referring to ISEP in the same sentence. ISEP is singular. This means that we should say: *ISEP is...* or *ISEP has...*

We shouldn't say: *ISEP are...* or *ISEP have...*

When writing blogs or quotes, it is acceptable to use 'we' and 'our' to refer to ISEP.

The guidance

The guidance set out by ISEP may differ from guidance you have seen or read elsewhere. For the purposes of content creation at ISEP, please treat this guidance as final. If you are producing content for a third-party, please request a copy of their style guide and ensure you are following their guidance.

If you are ever unsure on anything below, please let the communications team know, and one of us will get back to you asap. We'd also like to hear from you if you think something is missing.

Style guide

Style	Explanation/example
Spelling, punctuation and grammar	
All companies and organisations, including ISEP, are singular.	Use singular verbs: ISEP has… ISEP is…
Companies and organisations are inanimate.	Use "that" rather than "who": A company that has… NOT A company who has…
When using collective nouns, treat them as singular.	The UK government is… NOT The UK government are… Caveat: "members of the team are…" is correct.
In accordance with common usage in publications such as the BBC, The Financial Times, and The Guardian, we treat data as singular, as we do with agenda.	This is also the approach adopted by UK government: "Treat as a singular noun: The data is stored on a secure server… The data shows.. NOT "The data are" or "the data show".

Style guide

Style	Explanation/example
Spelling, punctuation and grammar	
Only uppercase the names of reports or policy documents if it is the exact name of the guidance, same for departments/organisations.	Right: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, ISEP's Developing Skills for Adaptation guide. Wrong: Department for Net Zero, ISEP's Skills Adaptation guide.
Full stop/punctuation marks should be included inside quotation marks at the end of quote when set up with a colon or in a full sentence (see example 1), but outside if it is a short quote with no colon setting it up (see example two). Quotation marks should appear at the start of each new paragraph of a quote but only at the end of the final paragraph (see example three).	Example 1. ISEP deputy CEO Martin Baxter said: "If we don't get the skill system right, we won't have the people to drive economic growth and attract green investment into the UK." Example 2. ISEP deputy CEO Martin Baxter said that we won't have the people to drive economic growth and attract green investment "If we don't get the skill system right". Example 3. ISEP deputy CEO Martin Baxter said: "If we don't get the skill system right, we won't have the people to drive economic growth and attract green investment into the UK. "For example, there is a massive amount of infrastructure needed to get the UK power system to net-zero by 2030 and we need to grow green skills at all levels, including technicians, trades and practical on-the-ground roles, such as welders, that will be driven by apprenticeships."
Hyphenate two words when together they act as an adjective (known as a compound modifier). Eg. net-zero emissions, high-paid jobs, low-income workers.	

Style guide

Style	Explanation/example
Spelling, punctuation and grammar	
'However' should have a comma on either side when in middle of sentence, and a comma after it at the start of a sentence.	Example 1. The UK is still off track for net-zero, however, significant progress has been made. Example 2. However, the UK is still off track to deliver net-zero.
Use 'an' before words beginning 'h' if the 'h' is silent and followed by a vowel. eg. 'an honorary Fellow'.	
Do not use large amounts of block capitals as they can be difficult to read. Capitals can be used for headlines, shorter headings, typographic emphasis and key facts that require impact. Always use sentence case for body copy.	
Always use (round brackets) unless referring to explanatory notes or placeholder text. In this instance, use [square brackets].	
Lower case government unless it's a full title.	For example: 'UK government', but 'His Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland'.
Lower case minister unless part of a specific job title.	For example: "The minister visited…" "The Minister for Science visited…"
Always use upper case for government departments.	For example: Cabinet Office (CO), Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), Ministry of Defence (MOD), and Ministry of Justice (MOJ).

Style guide

Style	Explanation/example
Spelling, punctuation and grammar	
Acts of Parliament should be referred to in lower case unless referring to a specific title.	For example: Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
An abbreviation is a shortening of a word or a phrase. An acronym is an abbreviation that forms a word. Always spell out a word in full before using an abbreviation. The abbreviation should be put in brackets when first used.	Distribution Network Operator (DNO). Do not use full stops: DNO, not D.N.O.
The words its and it's are two different words with two different meanings. It's is an abbreviation of 'it is' and its means 'belonging to'.	The dog has hurt its leg. He says it's two o'clock.
The words there, their, and there are three different words with different meanings.	There was nobody in the office. I saw their report online. They're presenting the findings.
Spell proper adjectives (describing words derived from proper nouns) and proper nouns with a capital letter.	Proper adjective examples: English, Canadian, Russian. Proper noun examples: China, England, Canada.
Use an apostrophe + s for singular owners.	ISEP's report.

Style guide

Style	Explanation/example
Spelling, punctuation and grammar	
Use ie. to clarify a sentence and eg. to provide examples. Ideally, use 'for example' rather than eg.	Our presentation is due by 5:00 p.m. on Friday – ie. we need to get our edits in no later than 4:00 p.m. on Thursday.
Use 'etc' rather than 'etc.'	Do not put a full stop after 'etc' unless it's at the end of a sentence.
The Oxford comma is a comma used after the penultimate item in a list of three or more items, before 'and' or 'or'.	If using it in your work, please be consistent and apply its use. For example: Today I went to lunch with my colleagues, Tom, and Molly.
Avoid Americanisation. Use 's' not 'z' and always use English (United Kingdom).	Avoid spellings such as 'color' and 'aluminum', these are American words. Always spellcheck and make sure your system default is English (UK).
Do not double space at the end of a sentence.	
Full stops should not be included at the end of a photo or illustration caption unless there are multiple sentences in the caption.	
Use 'and' instead of "&" – except on social media (X) and where it is used in a company, network, or organisation name.	
Full stops should be included at the end of footnotes. Except after web addresses.	Eg. Visit ISEP: isepglobal.org
Try to avoid semicolons if possible, as full stops with new sentences or commas are often more appropriate.	

Style guide

Style	Explanation/example
Spelling, punctuation and grammar	
For the convenience of the reader, use footnotes (appear at the bottom of the page) rather than endnotes (appear at the end of a document). NOTE: For writing online, such as news, blogs and other articles, we encourage authors to include hyperlinks instead of footnotes where possible. For Transform in print, we ask authors to write the footnote information into the article, for space reasons.	Eg. reference[1] – but not reference[(1)] or reference [1]. Generally, put any footnote references before any punctuation eg. reference[1], and reference[1].
Word contractions and measures should not end in a full stop unless at the end of a sentence.	If the measurement is more than one word, such as kilometres per hour, then spell it out first time. From then on, abbreviate. If you only mention it once, do not abbreviate. For example: Driving 200 kph is extremely fast. They were driving 200 kph.
The ellipsis (…), also called omission marks or the suspension, has just two uses. First, the ellipsis is used to show that some material has been omitted from the middle of a direct quotation. Second, the ellipsis is used to show that a sentence has been left unfinished.	
Focused or focussed.	While both are acceptable spellings, 'focussed' is the preferred option.
Adviser is preferred to advisor.	Advisory is the correct adjective.

Style guide

Style	Explanation/example
Spelling, punctuation and grammar	
Double quotation marks should be used for direct quotes. If a quote appears within a quote, single quotation marks should be used within double quotation marks. Punctuation marks at the end of quotes should appear within the quotation marks. (Example 1). If a quote is broken into two or more paragraphs, omit the closing speech marks at the end of the paragraphs. But start each new paragraph with double quotation marks and close the final paragraph with double quotation marks as normal. (Example 2).	Example 1. For example: "I presented on the findings of the report. I heard one attendee remark 'I don't believe it' as he listened." Example 2. For example: "It was an unfortunate series of events that led us to this situation. "One incident after another resulted in what we see today."
Unfamiliar words and/or phrases can be placed in single quotation marks. Use this for project names that may not be instantly recognisable to an external audience.	For example: 'Warm Home Prescription'.
When referring to location names, including city, county or country, use upper case. The rule on location names does not extend to areas such as the 'north', 'the north of England' or the 'north-east'. These should always be lower case. This is because they are not defined regional locations such as the Midlands.	For example: Midlands, West Midlands, East End (London).
Hyphenate geographic areas such as 'north-east' and 'north-west'.	
The government style guide provides the following guidance on writing about members of the national and regional Parliaments. Use MP, MS, MSP. Do not spell this out when referring to individuals or a group of politicians.	

Style guide

Style	Explanation/example
Spelling, punctuation and grammar	
Make sure text is gender neutral wherever possible, such as 'them', 'their' or 'they'. When referring to individuals, please ensure you are using their preferred pronouns.	
Use 'per year' or '/year'.	Do not use 'per annum' or 'pa'.
Use italics only when referring to publication titles, figures (in text), and Latin words or phrases.	
Use bold sparingly and only for emphasis on key words or phrases.	
Use % as opposed to per cent or percent.	100% not 100 per cent or percent.
How a bullet list is punctuated depends on the information that is being presented. For a short list of items there is no need to punctuate each point. You should use a colon to introduce the list and the first letter of each point should be capitalised. (Example 1). For a list of longer items or sentences, which follow on from an introductory sentence, the final item should end with a full stop. (Example 2 & 3).	Example 1: • Carrots • Milk • Eggs • Cheese Example 2: ISEP can help your business with: • Sustainable skills training • Guidance on climate adaptation.

Style guide

Style	Explanation/example
Spelling, punctuation and grammar	
Ensure that the tense and structure of each item work with the introductory sentence. The first letter of each point should still be capitalised.	Example 3: There are many ways that ISEP can help your business. For example: • ISEP can support with sustainable skills training. • Guidance on climate adaptation and cutting emissions.
Titles should appear at the top of tables and figures.	
Key phrases like 'net-zero' and 'green skills' should not be capitalised.	
Use words like 'among' or' while', not 'amongst' or 'whilst'.	
Use first or second, not firstly or secondly.	
Use surname after a person's name is spelt out in full first. Except for ISEP staff, where we use our first names.	Example 1. UK chancellor Rachel Reeves has unveiled a string of massive spending cuts. Reeves said that the cuts were necessary. Example 2. ISEP CEO Sarah Mukherjee MBE spoke at an event on building green skills. Sarah said these are needed to accelerate the net-zero transition.
Acts and Bills written in full in first instance, then referred to as 'the Act' or 'the Bill'. Lowercase if talking about bills or acts generally, eg. The chancellor unveiled a raft of new bills.	

Style guide

Style	Explanation/example
Spelling, punctuation and grammar	
The number used in chemical abbreviations should be subscript (eg. CO_2, N_2O). The 'x' used in 'NOx and 'SOx' should be lower case and not subscript. Note: This does not apply on the website as functionality does not support subscript.	
In written text, when referencing our website use isepglobal.org	
Please use the following method for referencing: Howland, JLC, *Note on References*. FES Occasional Papers, AEAT, Harwell 2006.	The basic order is as follows: • Author (Other, AN) with co-authors separated by commas • Title in italic, as it appears on the original (ie with regard to upper and lower case) • Report series and report number OR government publication series and number OR Conference Proceedings details if it is a Paper OR Journal title and issue if it is an article • Publisher (commercial for books, or government department, Agency, etc) • Place of publication • Date of publication.

Style guide

Style	Explanation/example
Numbers	
Always spell out the numbers zero to nine. After nine, use the numbers. However, this rule does not apply when using a number to start a sentence, in this instance, always spell the number out.	For example: "two reports out of 12…"
Ordinal numbers indicate the order of a collection of things within a list. Spell out first to ninth. After ninth, use 10th, 11th, and so on.	
Spell out simple fractions and use hyphens.	For example: • One-half • Two-thirds
Use 'and' rather than a hyphen when describing a range of values.	For example: • Savings of between 6% and 12%
Tonnes Carbon Dioxide Equivalent can be abbreviated to tCO2e.	
Put a space between a number and its unit (e.g., 23 kWh and 52 litres).	Prevent the figure and unit from splitting if they are at the end of a line by using a non-breaking space (press and hold Cntrl+Shift+space bar).

Style guide

Style	Explanation/example
Numbers	
The date should always be written in the following format: dd/mm/yyyy If writing span of years use the following format '2005/06' rather than '2005/2006' or '2005-06'. If writing a month and year always put it as July 2006 not July 06. If writing a day, month and year always put it as 18 July 2006 and not 18th July 2006.	However, use the full numbers if the range covers a period in two different centuries (eg. 1998/2002).
Express decades as complete numerals. Do not use an apostrophe between the year and the s.	'During the 1980s and 1990s' is correct.
Use a capital 'M' as an abbreviation for 'mega' (eg. megawatt hour (MWh)). Do not use it as an abbreviation for million.	
When discussing money, use the full amount. For example, £179,000, not £179k.	
For millions, use £5 million first and then thereafter £5m. Note: This does not apply in the headlines of press releases.	

Common mistakes when spelling

Spelling matters – if you want to create a good impression in your writing and get the right meaning across, it's important to spell (and punctuate). We can all make a difference to our writing by simply updating the language preference on Word, PPT, and other such templates to English (United Kingdom).

Misspelled & confused words	Explanation/example
Advice and advise	Advice is a noun (as in 'the advice I was given'). Advise is a verb (as in 'Please advise me what to do').
Affect and effect	To affect something is to influence or change it. For example: tiredness affected his concentration. An effect is a result something gives or an impression something makes. For example: discoveries that have a profound effect on medicine.
Complement and compliment	A 'complement' is something that goes well with another or completes it ('Cheese is a perfect complement to wine). To 'complement' something is to go well with it or complete it. A compliment is a remark expressing admiration (It's always good to pass a compliment'). To compliment something is to express admiration for it
Colour vs Color	Always use the English (United Kingdom) spelling of words. Use Colour over Color.
Licence and license	Licence is a noun (as in 'a driver's licence'). License is a verb (as in 'Censors agreed to license the film')

Common mistakes when spelling

Misspelled & confused words	Explanation/example
Practice and practise	Practice is a noun (as in 'piano practice' and 'a doctor's practice'). Practise is a verb (as in 'I practise the piano' and 'you are practising golf'). ISEP has X practice areas and not practise areas.
Principal and principle	'Principal' is a noun and adjective. It means the main or most important (as in 'Mr Smith is the school principal' and 'the festival has two principal themes'). 'Principle' is only a noun. It means general rule, or a belief (as in 'the basic principles of Marxism' or 'a person of principle'). 'In principle' means 'in theory'. Principal Consultant and not Principle Consultant.
Programme and program	A programme is a plan or schedule. It is also something on television or radio. 'Program' is a computer program.
Stationery and stationary	'Stationery' is paper, pens and other writing equipment. 'Stationary' means not moving.
Sub-meter and Submeter	Sub-meter should be used over Submeter.

Common mistakes when spelling

Misspelled & confused words	Explanation/example
Your and you're	'Your' is used when referring to something belonging or relating to the person or people being addressed or relating to people in general (as in 'your sister is right' and 'cigarettes can damage your health'). 'You're' is an abbreviation of 'you are' (as in 'you're brilliant).
Be careful when using 'Britain' or 'UK' as they are different	The UK is a country that consists of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Great Britain is the island containing England, Scotland, and Wales.

Alternatives to outdated and offensive terms

With support from the Diverse Sustainability Initiative

This guidance is not a definitive answer for all terms used in the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion space. It serves as a starting point. Many of the terms listed here may be considered offensive by various communities. Our goal is to listen, understand, and strive to use the preferred language. While we may not always get it right, it is best practice to remain open to learning and improve continuously.

Outdated term	Reason	Source	Alternative
First World/ Third World and 'first world problem' First World: Countries aligned with the Western Bloc (ie. NATO and allies), led by the United States. Third World: The Non-Aligned Movement, led by India and Yugoslavia, and other neutral countries.	These classifications hail from the Cold War period, back when the world was divided into allies and enemies. Neutral, non-aligned countries occupied the place of the "third world," while the "first world" consisted of countries in the United States' sphere of influence and the "second world" referred to the communist-socialist states.'	The case against "first world problems" | The Wellesley News **Another resource:** What's the Real Problem with "First World Problems" ? | Tangents USA (wordpress.com)	Developed/ Industrialised Nation (instead of first world) & Global South (instead of third world)
Nitty Gritty The basic facts of a situation.	It is believed the phrase once had less palatable connotations, with many considering the term to have roots to be in the slave trade – its use is already banned in institutions like the police force. Theories suggest the expression originally referred to the detritus found in the bottom of boats once a shipment of slaves had been removed from the hold, and was eventually stretched to refer to the slaves themselves.	Nitty-gritty meaning: the possible slave-trade origins of the phrase - and other terms that may have racist links (scotsman.com)	Bottom line

Alternatives to outdated and offensive terms

With support from the Diverse Sustainability Initiative

Outdated term	Reason	Source	Alternative
Purdah The pre-election period of sensitivity occurs in the weeks leading up to an election or referendum. The period is also called the period of 'heightened sensitivity' and in the past was often known by the term 'purdah'.	The period was originally known as purdah, although this name has been criticised for its sexist origins, and various public bodies and departments have dropped it in favour of terms like "pre-election period" and "heightened sensitivity". The word Purdah is Hindustani in origin and literally refers to a curtain or veil. Purdahs were traditionally used to screen women from male view, and the word came to be a general term for the South Asian practices of segregating the sexes and keeping women's bodies concealed. In English use, the word has the extended sense of "a period of seclusion or isolation", hence its former use in politics.	Purdah (pre-election period) – Wikipedia **Another resource:** Saying 'purdah' is 'sexist, racist and offensive', says Harini Iyengar | Metro News	Pre-election period or the period of heightened sensitivity.
Half-Caste Half-caste is a term used for individuals of multiracial descent.	With 'caste' originally meaning 'pure', the essence of calling someone 'half-caste' is to say they are half-pure. Historically, this term refers to purity as whiteness, and any other ethnicity that has been 'added' is tainting.	It's Time to Ask Why? Why Certain Language is Offensive (hays.co.uk)	Mixed race, Bi-racial or multiracial.

Alternatives to outdated and offensive terms

With support from the Diverse Sustainability Initiative

Outdated term	Reason	Source	Alternative
BAME and BME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic).	Avoid using the terms BAME (black, Asian and minority ethnic) and BME (black and minority ethnic) because they emphasise certain ethnic minority groups (Asian and black) and exclude others (mixed, other and white ethnic minority groups). The terms can also mask disparities between different ethnic groups and create misleading interpretations of data. In March 2021, the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities recommended that the government stop using the term BAME.	Writing about ethnicity – GOV.UK (ethnicity-facts-figures.service gov.uk) **Another resource:** Please, don't call me BAME or BME! – Civil Service (blog.gov.uk)	Black, Asian and ethnic minorities.
Coloured People Colored (or coloured) is a racial descriptor historically used in the United States during the Jim Crow Era to refer to an African American.	'Coloured people', an outdated term to refer to people who aren't white and ties back to the Jim Crow segregation laws that existed in Southern USA until the 1960s.	It's Time to Ask Why? Why Certain Language is Offensive (hays.co.uk)	People of Colour

Alternatives to outdated and offensive terms

With support from the Diverse Sustainability Initiative

Outdated term	Reason	Source	Alternative
Minority group A culturally, ethnically, or racially distinct group that coexists with but is subordinate to a more dominant group.	This word is starting to receive some divided responses, it might be one to watch in the future. The denotation of the *word* minority is this: the smaller part or number; a number, part, or amount forming less than half of the whole. The denotation of the *phrase* "minority group" is this: a group of people whose practices, race, religion, ethnicity, or other characteristics are fewer in numbers than the main groups of those classifications. The two definitions refer to an amount being lesser than half of the whole. As a matter of fact, the word *minority* and phrase *minority* group is often used ineffectively as a euphemism for "other" groups that are non-white and male.	Why I Asked My Team to Avoid Saying the Word "Minority?" | LinkedIn **Other resources:** What's wrong with the word 'minority'? – Fast Company Why I Wish Nonprofits Would Stop Using the Word "Minorities" (ssir.org)	Marginalised Underrepresented Minoritised

Alternatives to outdated and offensive terms

With support from the Diverse Sustainability Initiative

Outdated term	Reason	Source	Alternative
Disadvantaged/ Poor Poor: lacking sufficient money to live at a standard considered comfortable or normal in a society. Disadvantaged: (of a person or area) in unfavourable circumstances, especially with regard to financial or social opportunities. (Oxford Dictionary)	This is another term that is more commonly receiving backlash. This brings us to another problem with terming someone as 'disadvantaged': it suggests a binary classification between who is or who is not 'advantaged' that can lead us into superficial two-dimensional thinking.	Why we should no longer talk about 'disadvantaged' pupils (schoolsweek.co.uk) Style-Guide-for-Inclusive-Language_Dec-2017.pdf (dcfpi.org) **Other resources:** Don't call me 'Disadvantaged' – Positive Young Minds Don't call me Disadvantaged – Removing labels – St Johns Foundation | Good Living & Funding Support in Bath (stjohnsbath.org.uk)	People facing barriers/ multiple barriers People with low incomes Low-income Low-wealth People with incomes below the poverty line Under-resourced

Alternatives to outdated and offensive terms
With support from the Diverse Sustainability Initiative

Outdated term	Reason	Source	Alternative
Blackmail The action, treated as a criminal offence, of demanding payment or another benefit from someone in return for not revealing compromising or damaging information about them. **Blacklist** To put someone's name on a list of people who are considered not acceptable, which keeps the person from getting jobs, going certain places, or doing particular things. **Black sheep** A person who has done something bad that brings embarrassment or shame to their family. **Whitelist** A whitelist or allowlist is a list or register of entities that are being provided a particular privilege, service, mobility, access or recognition.	"The issue here is that these are all negative terms," said Joseph Smith, an anti-racism trainer and educator. "[It] connotes evil, distrust, lack of intelligence, ignorance, a lack beauty – the absence of white." This lowering of blackness on the spectrum with regards to value was developed further in the wake of the transatlantic slave trade. To some, 'whitelist' may seem innocuous, as the term has been used in a number of industries, especially software, for a long time. But the idea of color-coding to mean 'good' or 'bad' evokes racist ideologies. Even though it's being used to describe things, rather than people, it's still pulling from those ideas. So the word is problematic, regardless of the intent of the speaker or the ubiquity of the term. But it's easily replaced by other terminology, like *permit list*.	Words and phrases you may want to think twice about using | CBC News 10 Insensitive Words You Need to Stop Using Right Now (writer.com)	Blackmail: Threaten Blacklist: Boycott, Avoid, block-list Black sheep: Outcast Whitelist: allow list, permit list

Alternatives to outdated and offensive terms

With support from the Diverse Sustainability Initiative

Outdated term	Reason	Source	Alternative
Savage In the modern context, savage has become a word used to describe someone who is fierce, or a situation that is intense – and carries a positive or semi-positive connotation.	The problem, he says, is the word's origin: it was used by colonizers who saw themselves as "the epitome of refinement, intelligence, spirituality" and considered Indigenous people, and Black and other people of colour who were forcibly brought to North America, or arrived here soon after colonization, as "savage, brutal, unrefined, and uncultured in comparison to European settlers." In 2019, an Indigenous educator called out a clothing line for using the word on T-shirts. "It's important to understand that for Indigenous people, this word is our N-word," said Douglas Stewart at the time.	Words and phrases you may want to think twice about using | CBC News **Another resource:** Words That Don't Belong to Us: Why It's Time to Say Goodbye to Using the Word 'Savage'– Chrissy King	Fierce, wild, ferocious

Alternatives to outdated and offensive terms

With support from the Diverse Sustainability Initiative

- Use capital letters when referring to ethnic groups, for example, "In comparison, Black staff felt…"

- Spell out acronyms if you really need to use them.

- Don't forget that ethnic minorities include White minorities.

- People have different preferences, there isn't always 'one solution' for everyone and even some of these preferred terms might change.

- While not everyone will find all these terms offensive, it's important to understand why some people do and do our best to avoid them.

- Don't be too hard on yourself if you get something wrong! It's how you react and what you do moving forward that counts.

LGBTQIA+ inclusion

Outdated term	Reason	Source	Alternative
Sexual Preference The predominant predilection or inclination that defines a person as a heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual.	Avoid the offensive term "sexual preference," which is used to inaccurately suggest that being gay, lesbian, or bisexual is voluntary and "curable."	Glossary of Terms: LGBTQ | GLAAD	Sexual Orientation
Homosexuals Attraction between people who are the same sex.	Avoid identifying gay people as "homosexuals" an outdated term considered derogatory and offensive to many lesbian and gay people. Ask people how they describe themselves before labelling their sexual orientations.	Glossary of Terms: LGBTQ | GLAAD	Gay/ lesbian/ queer/ bisexual (people have different preferences so it's best practice to ask what their preferred term is).
Identifies as To recognise or decide that you belong to a particular category.	Avoid saying that transgender people "identify as" their gender. That implies that gender identity is a choice. Avoid "Marisol identifies as a woman."	Glossary of Terms: Transgender | GLAAD	Transgender people are their gender the same way cisgender people are their gender. For example, "Marisol is a transgender woman."

LGBTQIA+ inclusion

Outdated term	Reason	Source	Alternative
Sex change, pre operation or post-operation An instance of a transgender person permanently adopting the outward or physical characteristics that match their gender identity, as opposed to those associated with the sex registered for them at birth, in particular when this involves surgical procedures or hormone treatment.	Referring to a "sex-change operation," or using terms such as "pre-operative" or "post-operative," inaccurately suggests that a person must have surgery in order to transition. Avoid overemphasising surgery when discussing transgender people or the process of transition.	Glossary of Terms: Transgender | GLAAD	Transition
Preferred pronouns The term preferred pronouns is used to mean the personal pronouns a person identifies with and would like to be referred to by.	To prefer something is to like it more than you like something else. That is to say that in a matter of preference, both option one and option two are viable, but if given the opportunity to choose, you would choose one over the other. To that end, the phrase "preferred gender pronouns," while well-intended, gives the impression that pronouns other than the ones specified are acceptable. However, in most instances, when it comes to gender pronouns, that simply is not the case.	Why You Should Not Say 'Preferred Gender Pronouns' (forbes.com)	Pronouns

Neurodiversity, impairment, disorders and disability inclusion

Outdated term	Reason	Source	Alternative
Asperger's syndrome (a form of Autism Spectrum Disorder)	The term is no longer used officially; and because of revelations about the Austrian psychiatrist Hans Asperger, who Asperger syndrome was named after and who was complicit with the Nazis and murdered children with disabilities.	Asperger syndrome (Asperger's) (autism.org.uk)	Autism
Able-bodied This term is widely used to describe people who do not have a disability.	While people may use the word without meaning harm, "able-bodied" feeds into discrimination against people with a disability and implies those without are "superior." Furthermore, the word "able-bodied" insinuates that all people with disabilities do not have "normal" bodies and cannot use their bodies "properly," which is an untrue and hurtful narrative.	Words to Avoid—2024 Edition – Big Duck **Other resources:** I've an invisible disability so stop calling me 'able-bodied' | Metro News Inclusive language: words to use and avoid when writing about disability - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)	Does not have a disability' or 'is not living with a disability'.

Neurodiversity, impairment, disorders and disability inclusion

Outdated term	Reason	Source	Alternative
Special needs and handicapped Special needs: any of various difficulties (such as physical, emotional, behavioural, or learning disability or impairment) that causes an individual to require additional or specialised services or accommodations (such as in education or recreation). Handicapped: (of a person) having a condition that markedly restricts their ability to function physically, mentally, or socially.	The term "special needs" has come under increasing scrutiny over the years—and for good reason. It's a vague, euphemistic phrase that can be offensive to many people. Incidentally, the term "special needs" has no legal meaning. 'Handicapped' is an outdated and unacceptable term to use when referring to individuals or accessible environments. *Handicapped*, as used to describe people with disabilities, is a term that rose and fell with the 20th century. It arrived on the scene in the late 1800s as a way to talk about a range of disadvantages — one could be economically, socially or even morally handicapped by circumstances. Please note that in schools still use 'SEN' (special educational needs).	Language Doc.pdf (aucd.org) Why You Shouldn't Say "Special Needs" (parents.com) **Other resources:** BBC NEWS | Magazine | Don't call me handicapped! Guidelines for Writing About People With Disabilities | ADA National Network (adata.org) Why Did 'Disabled' Replace 'Handicapped' As the Preferred Term? | Mental Floss	A person with a disability When talking about places or accommodations, use the term 'accessible parking' instead of 'disabled parking' or 'handicapped parking'.

Neurodiversity, impairment, disorders and disability inclusion

Outdated term	Reason	Source	Alternative
Lame Lame was formerly common as a descriptor of any person or animal lacking full use of a part of the body and especially a limb. Over the course of the 20th century, however, numerous disparaging uses of lame became common, making the neutral medical uses as applied to people increasingly offensive.	This type of derogatory language perpetuates harmful stereotypes of disabled people. The Oxford English Dictionary tells us that lame means to be "disabled or impaired in any way; weak, infirm; paralyzed; unable to move." This dictionary tells us that the word lame also applies especially to being "disabled in the foot or leg, so as to walk haltingly or be unable to walk." Lame is no longer applied to people in medical contexts, and the disparaging uses, as in "a lame excuse," "he's so lame," "a lame party," and "lame jokes," are occasionally considered to be offensive as well. The use of lame in reference to animals remains common and is not usually regarded as offensive.	Ableist Language To Avoid And Acceptable Alternatives - Emtrain Let's Stop Using the Word Lame | Learning for Justice Ableist Language To Avoid And Acceptable Alternatives – Lame Edition (therollingexplorer.com) Lame Definition & Meaning – Merriam-Webster	'Boring' 'annoying' 'dull' 'mundane' 'uncool'

Neurodiversity, impairment, disorders and disability inclusion

Outdated term	Reason	Source	Alternative
Tone deaf	Though it's used to describe someone who's not able to distinguish musical pitch, or metaphorically as someone who's insensitive to certain matters, tone deaf may not be a kind term to those who have hearing impairments. Cashman suggests using descriptors like "musically disinclined" instead. Insensitive is another suggestion.	Words and phrases you may want to think twice about using | CBC News	Insensitive
Bingeing/ Binge watching While we may joke about bingeing on a bag of chips, bingeing is associated with disorders. Many people, for example, suffer from Binge-eating Disorder (BED), which the Mayo Clinic defines as "a serious eating disorder in which you frequently consume unusually large amounts of food and feel unable to stop eating."	When most of us use phrases like *binge-watch* or *gag me with a spoon*, we aren't trying to cause harm. However, our willingness, inadvertent or not, to treat eating disorders, their symptoms, and their vocabulary as a joke means that the 30 million people in the US who suffer from some form of an eating disorder can feel stigmatized, made to feel like their conditions aren't serious.	The Issue With Casually Using The Word "Binge" - Dictionary.com **Another resource:** Why the Phrase "Binge-Watching" is Triggering - National Eating Disorders Association.	Indulge, splurge, marathon

AGE INCLUSION

Outdated term	Reason	Source	Alternative
Elderly	Ageism is real, and using the word *elderly* to describe someone is one of the ways that it can manifest. The word invites the discrimination that older individuals often face, and it's associated with things that are typically thought of in a negative light, like sickness or inability. So it's best avoided. A better phrase would be *older person or senior adult.*	10 Insensitive Words You Need to Stop Using Right Now (writer.com)	Senior

GETTING STARTED ON WRITING

1. **Think carefully about what you want to say.** Jot down a few ideas, they don't need to be structured, these are just your initial thoughts. Let your ideas flow, you can tidy them up later.

2. **Remember your audience.** What do they want to know? Remember, you're not here to sell them a product, service, or idea. They're the hero in the story. What problem can they solve if they come to you?

3. **Create your structure.** Now you're clear on what they want to know, lay it out. Think of an inverted triangle with the most important information at the top. Read it aloud, would the person you're writing for be interested?

4. **Write your headings.** These are your signposts and will help your reader get to the text that they're interested in. Don't take it personally, but many people do not read every word.

5. **Begin...**Now you're ready to get started on your ugly first draft. Focus on putting pen to paper. Don't edit as you go. Say what you want to say and edit it later.

CONTACT

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