

Major and minor errors for content quality spot check reports (GOV.UK Departments and Policy content)

The following table lists the most common errors found in content spot check reports and whether we consider them to be a major or minor error.

- a major error is something that could stop a user understanding the content or that completely disrupts their experience
- a minor error makes it harder for a user to understand the content

Errors are defined as anything that does not follow GOV.UK style guidance and principles. Basic web and editorial good practice eg spelling, grammar etc. should also be followed.

In some cases a minor error could be major depending on context – for example a summary that is so excessively over the 140 character limit, that it disrupts user experience.

Topic	Error	Categorisation	Reference
4 of the same minor error	4 or more of the same minor error	Major	See spot check report.
Abbreviations	Abbreviation not explained at first use	Major	See the style guide on abbreviations and acronyms.
Acronyms	Acronym not explained at first use	Major	See the style guide on abbreviations and acronyms.
Acronyms	Acronym Markdown missing	Major	See the style guide on abbreviations and acronyms.
Active voice	Sentence in passive voice	Major	See the style guide on using the active voice.
Addressing the user	Not directly addressing the user as 'you' where necessary	Minor	See the style guide on addressing the user.
Americanisms	Use of American version of a word or phrase	Minor	See the style guide on Americanisms.
Ampersands	Incorrect use of ampersands	Minor	See the style guide on ampersands.
Be concise	Using waffle or not being concise	Major	See the style guide on being concise.
Brackets	Incorrect use of parentheses or brackets	Minor	See the style guide on using brackets.
Bullet points and steps	Missing or incorrect bullet Markdown	Minor	See the 'How to publish content on GOV.UK' on bullet markdown.
Bullet points and steps	Incorrect lead-in sentence, semi colons or other formatting	Minor	See the style guide on bullet points and steps.
Bullet points	Lists in the text not	Major	See the style guide on

and steps	bulleted		bullet points and steps.
Bullet points and steps	Two sentences in a single bullet	Minor	See the style guide on bullet points and steps.
Bullet points and steps	More than 2 sentences in a single bullet	Major	See the style guide on bullet points and steps.
Buried call to action	Putting important information low on the page / burying the call to action	Major	See the style guide on writing for the web.
Capitalisation	Incorrect use of capitalisation	Minor	See the style guide on capitalisation.
Capitalisation of geographical regions	Incorrect use of capitals for names of areas, eg South London should be south London	Minor	See the style guide on geography and regions.
Consultations	Rewriting body copy to be in past tense	Minor	See the blog post on consultations.
Contractions	Incorrect use of contractions	Minor	See the style guide on contractions.
Dates	Dates not formatted to correct style	Minor	See the style guide on dates and times.
Detail/body copy	Detail does not give a clear description of documents on the page	Major	See the style guide on publications.
Detailed guide	Detailed guides not tagged to a policy	Major	See this blog post on tagging policies.
Duplicate content	Duplicating content on other parts of GOV.UK	Major	See the style guide on avoiding duplication
Duplicate content	Repeating the same sentence within a piece	Major	See the style guide on being concise.
Etc, eg, ie	Using a full stop after or between these notations	Minor	See the style guide on eg, etc, and ie.
FAQs	Use of FAQs	Major	See the style guide on FAQs
Gender neutral text	Not using gender neutral text	Minor	See the style guide on gender-neutral text.
Grammar	Grammatical error	Major	See the style guide on writing for GOV.UK.
Hyphenation	Incorrect use of hyphen or missing hyphen	Minor	See the style guide on hyphenation.
Images	Photos are portrait, not the right size, poor quality or don't support the story	Minor	See the style guide on images.
Incorrect information	Content is factually incorrect	Major	See the style guide on writing for GOV.UK.
Italics	Incorrect formatting	Minor	See the style guide on italics.
Job titles	Not using the correct convention for a job or name	Minor	See the style guide on capitalisation including job titles.
Legal language	Incorrectly used legal term or inappropriately included or not explained	Major	See the style guide on legal language.

Links	Use of hover text in links	Minor	See 'How to publish on GOV.UK' on style for links.
Links	Broken links	Major	See the style guide on links.
Links	Misleading, unhelpful or inadequate link text	Major	See the style guide on links.
Links	Too many links in a piece of a text	Minor	See the style guide on links.
Markdown	Incorrect and dysfunctional Markdown	Major	See 'how to publish on GOV.UK' on using markdown.
Markdown	Incorrect or missing, but functioning, Markdown	Minor	See 'How to publish content on GOV.UK' on using Markdown.
Marketing tone	Inappropriate 'selling' or 'marketing' tone	Major	Outside of GOV.UK proposition.
Measurements	Incorrect formatting	Minor	See the style guide on measurements.
Money	Incorrect formatting	Minor	See the style guide on money.
News stories	News story promoting other content eg press release	Major	See the style guide on not duplicating news stories.
Numbers	Incorrect formatting of numbers	Minor	See the style guide on numbers.
Out of date copy	Out of date copy eg "this consultation will close in March 2013"	Major	See the style guide on writing for GOV.UK.
Plain English	Technical terms not clearly explained	Major	See the style guide on plain English – mandatory for all of GOV.UK.
Plain English (banned words)	Using words on the style guide list of words to avoid	Major	See the style guide on plain English – mandatory for all of GOV.UK.
Quotes	More than 2 consecutive sentences of quotes	Minor	See the style guide on using quotes.
Quotes and speech marks	Incorrect use of blockquotes Markdown	Minor	See 'How to publish content on GOV.UK' on using Markdown.
Quotes and speech marks	Wrong quotes used	Minor	See 'How to publish content on GOV.UK' on using Markdown.
Search engine optimisation (SEO)	Titles/summaries not optimised for search	Major	See the style guide on titles.
Sentence length	Sentence over 30 words long	Major	See the style guide on being concise.
Spaces	One space after full stop, not 2	Minor	See the style guide on spaces.
Speeches	Ellipses (...) left in speech	Minor	Good practice for

			accessibility.
Spelling/typo	Spelling error or typo that changes meaning/affect search or have serious consequences eg a typo that creates an inappropriate word or in high profile or sensitive content, or is in the title or summary	Major	See the style guide on writing for GOV.UK.
Spelling/typo	Spelling error or typo that doesn't change meaning/affect search or have serious consequences	Minor	See the style guide on writing for GOV.UK.
Subheadings	Incorrect or non-sequential use of headings (eg H2, H3, H4, H2)	Minor	Good practice for accessibility.
Subheadings	Using unclear or vague subheads (eg further information)	Major	See the style guide on structuring content.
Subheadings	Not enough or no subheads in content	Major	See the style guide on structuring content.
Summaries	Summary not clear or helpful enough.	Major	See the style guide on summaries.
Summaries	Over 140 character limit.	Minor	See the style guide on summaries
Summaries	Summary is a repeat of the title or body text	Major	See the style guide on being concise.
Summaries for news stories	Summary without a full stop	Major	See the style guide on summaries.
Telephone numbers	Incorrect formatting	Minor	See the style guide on telephone numbers.
Times	Time not formatted to correct style	Minor	See the style guide on dates and times.
Titles	Title length over 65 characters	Minor	See the style guide on titles.
Titles	Document title not clear or specific enough, or not optimised for search	Major	See the style guide on titles.
Titles	Using dashes instead of colons in the title	Minor	See the style guide on titles.
Titles	Title has a full stop in it	Minor	See the style guide on titles.