

# Infographic Guidelines

Version 1.0



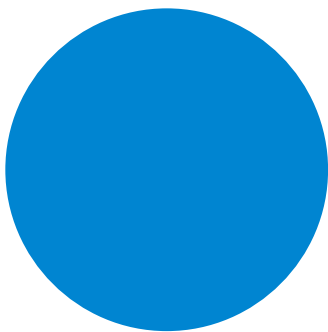


The Office for National Statistics (ONS) uses infographics to explain and offer insightful stories for the general public in an easy to understand and consumable manner, about the data we collect.

## ONS infographics should be:

**Informative . Effective . Functional . Honest . Elegant**

These guidelines set out the standards and best practice for developing ONS corporate infographics.



## What is an infographic?

**An infographic is** a self-contained visual story, presenting information, data or knowledge clearly, with meaning and context, and without bias.

**An infographic is not** a visual list, a group of large numbers with supporting graphics, a collection of stats, or codependent on another release, article, or report.

# Work together

This framework outlines the processes and key roles required to deliver high quality and consistent corporate infographics.

Please ensure that these key roles are carried out by professionals with the appropriate skill sets, for further information contact the teams listed on the back cover.

## Outline story

Before starting work ensure everyone understands the story the infographic is going to tell. Meet in person or over the phone.



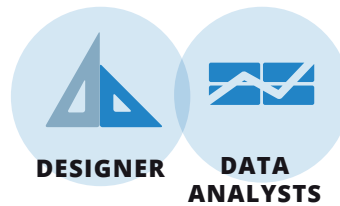
## Concept ideas

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



## Visual design

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



## Review

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



## Sign Off

Send to required parties to seek sign off before releasing.



## Release

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



# 'If it isn't a challenge it's not worth doing'.

- Data visualisation Guardian Masterclass

You are a storyteller. Don't just copy and paste data.  
Construct a story with context and flow.



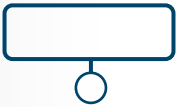
## Know your audience and purpose

Who is the target audience? Tailor the infographic to your audience, consider which release channel is appropriate e.g., website, social media



## Let the data lead the story...

..but don't assume you know what the story is e.g., what about an emerging trend, is the story relevant to the audience?



## Add context

Challenge yourselves to highlight or introduce something to improve the story e.g., annotate key dates on a time series chart



## Always be accurate

Keep checking back with your sources, as manipulation of data will occur throughout the developmental process



## Organise the information

Left to right, top to bottom - is how this will be read



## Keep it simple - show don't tell

Not just large numbers, combine white space with simple visuals



## Teach users something new

Will the user learn something? Yes = success, No = time to refine or rethink

# Tell the best possible story

Here are five examples of common infographics. All follow ONS' infographic style. Use them as starting points to help structure story flow and hierarchy of information.

EXAMPLE ONE

## Capturing the state of industry or trend

**Story flow tips**

Use title to set up the story



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



Use subtitles to help with the flow of the story



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



Footer and logo (used on all infographics)

**General tips**

Call out boxes used to give context and identify key information

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

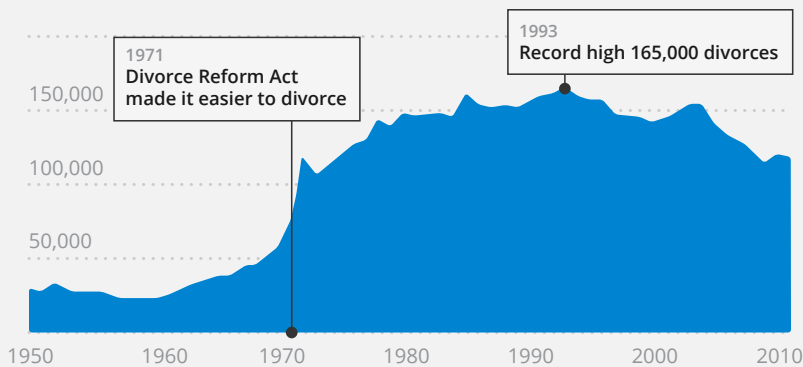
Use white (or negative) space to balance the composition of the graphic and aid accessibility

Consider different approaches for visualising the data

Strike a balance between visual appeal and comprehension

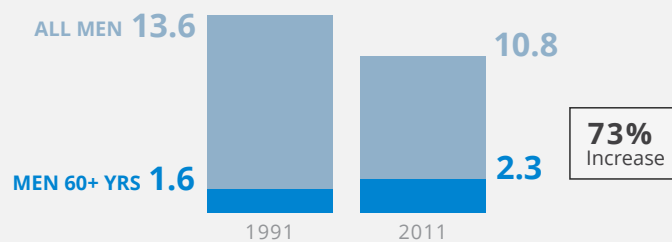
# More older people divorcing

## DIVORCE RATE 1950 TO 2011

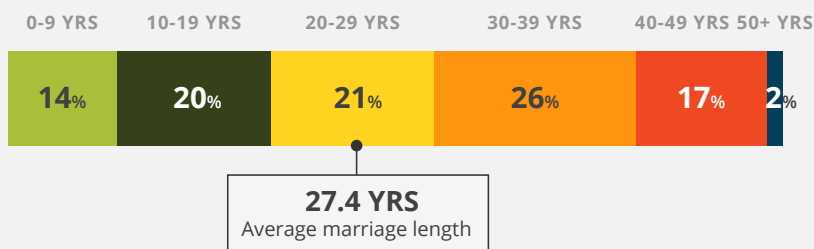


## RISE IN DIVORCE RATE AMONG OLDER MEN

Per 1,000 married men



## LENGTH OF MARRIAGE IN 2011 FOR MEN 60+ YRS



# Providing a resource

## Story flow tips

Use the title and introduction to provide context for viewer

Words can be used to highlight key data and messages

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

## General tips

Background line used to help guide the viewer through the story

# Consumer Prices Index (CPI)

The CPI measures the change in the general level of prices charged for goods and services bought for the purpose of household consumption in the UK. It forms the basis for the UK Government's inflation target that the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee is required to achieve.

APPROX **700**

SEPARATE GOODS AND SERVICES ARE SELECTED TO REFLECT TYPICAL HOUSEHOLD SPENDING

(Fixed for a 12 month period)



These items are reviewed every year to reflect UK shopping and purchasing patterns using a wide range of information, to keep pace with general spending habits.

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

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

**110,000**  
PRICES  
for **560** items

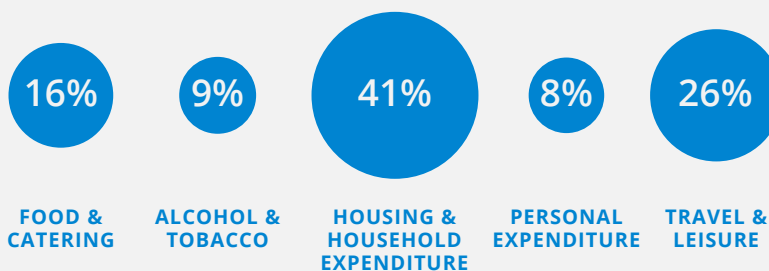


By ONS centrally

**70,000**  
PRICES  
for **140** items

## INDEX WEIGHTING

As we spend more on some items than others, the components of the index are 'weighted' to ensure that it reflects the importance of the various items in the average shopping basket, and the amounts we spend in different regions of the country and in different types of shops.



(2013 Percentages)

'Showing' comparisons in the data using shape area

# Providing a resource (continued)

CATERING TOBACCO HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURE LEISURE EXPENDITURE

(2013 Percentages)

## CALCULATING THE INDEX



By 'chain-linking' calculations it takes account of changes in the make-up of the shopping basket from year to year, along with 'like for like' comparisons between different years. It ensures that the index is not distorted when items are either removed from, or introduced into the CPI 'shopping basket'.

Develop a simple diagram to highlight process and to add focus

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

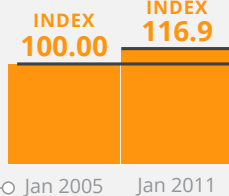
Providing a natural ending or conclusion will make the infographic more memorable

## HOW THE INDEX IS USED

**THE CPI MEASURES PRICE CHANGES, NOT PRICE LEVELS.**

...For example...

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



**16.9% ANNUAL RISE IN INFLATION**

Inflation is the percentage change in the latest index compared to the value recorded twelve months previously.

# Comparing A to B

**General tips**

Illustrations in silhouette form to add context

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

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

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

**Story flow tips**

Use an introduction to provide background context for viewer



Use the same visual language can help with comparisons

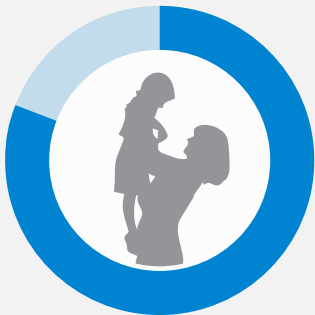
## Personal Well-Being 2012/2013

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



**77%**  
**SATISFIED WITH THEIR LIFE NOWADAYS**

**1.2%** Increase from previous year



**81%**  
**FEEL THAT THE THINGS IN YOUR LIFE ARE WORTHWHILE**

**0.7%** Increase from previous year



**72%**  
**FELT HAPPY YESTERDAY**

**0.5%** Increase from previous year



**21%**  
**FELT ANXIOUS YESTERDAY**

**0.9%** Decrease from previous year



# Showing the evolution of a concept or industry

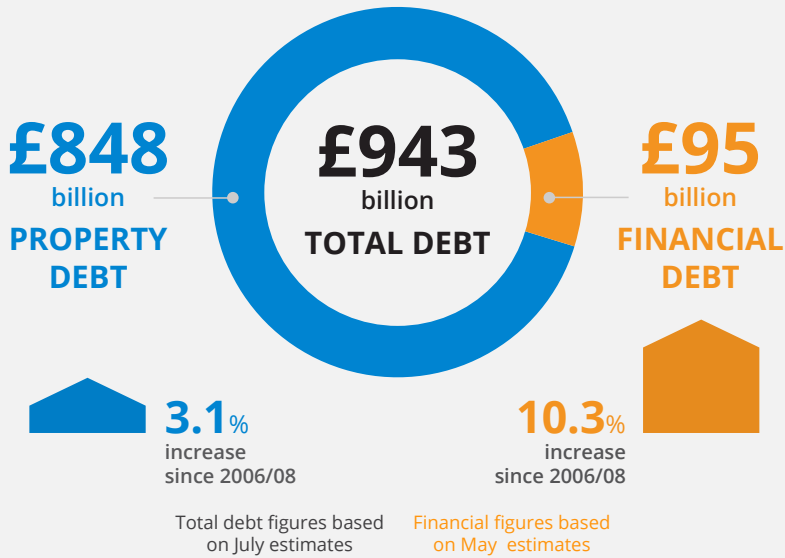
**Story flow tips**

**General tips**

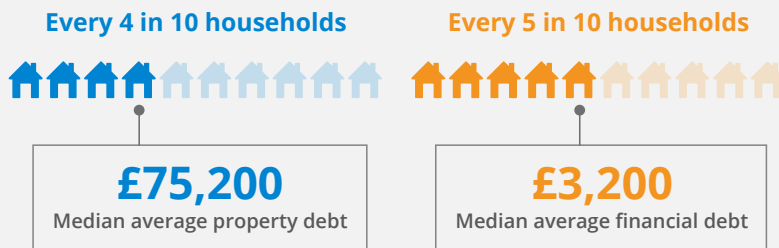
Present the key story message or information first to grab viewers attention

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

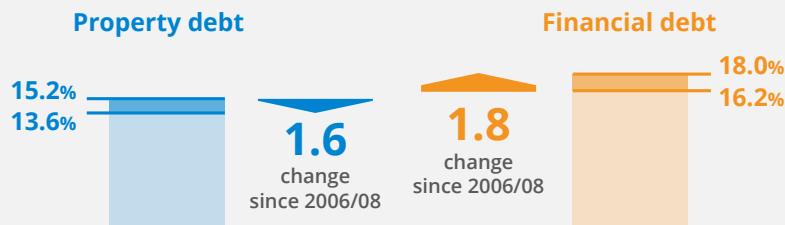
## Household Debt in Great Britain 2008-10



### HOUSEHOLDS WITH DEBT



### Households considering their debt to be a heavy burden



### Highest counts of property debt



Married/cohabiting couples with dependent

### Highest counts of financial debt



Lone parent households with

Dark line used to separate story sections

Visualise data with the use of icons

Light line used to separate story points

# Simplifying complex information

## Story flow tips

Present main take away first to set up story

Giving the viewer simple and easy insights to remember

Drilling down into the key points to offer additional insight

Bringing in data from other official sources to add extra context to the story

## General tips

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

Linking the story with the use of colour

### UK Family size



#### OVERALL AVERAGE DEPENDENT CHILDREN PER FAMILY

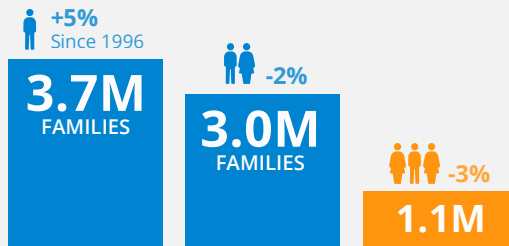


FOR LONE PARENTS AND COHABITING COUPLES



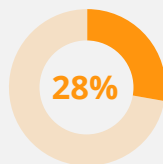
FOR MARRIED COUPLES OR IN CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS

### FAMILIES WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN

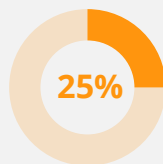


### LOCATIONS WITH HIGHEST PERCENTAGE

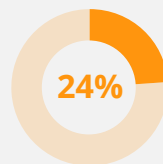
TOWER HAMLETS



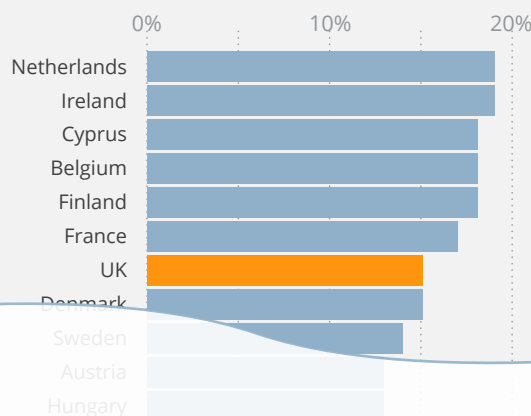
NEWHAM



BIRMINGHAM



### COMPARING FAMILIES WITH 3 OR MORE DEPENDENT CHILDREN ACROSS EUROPE <sup>(1)</sup>



# Be consistent with design

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

Full width 600px

1 Column layout 500px  
2 Column layout 245px


75px

## Title = Dax Medium 42pt

Introduction if required = Open Sans regular 13pt

### SUBTITLE = OPEN SANS BOLD 22PT

Body copy = Open Sans Regular 13pt

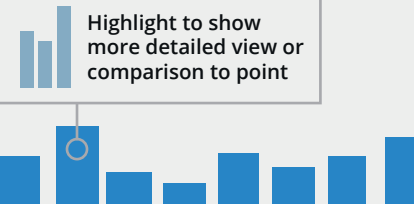


When visualising the data, use the appropriate chart or method in its simplest form. If using icons, be sure they layer or become part of the storytelling in considered ways, think beyond just using them to support large numbers.

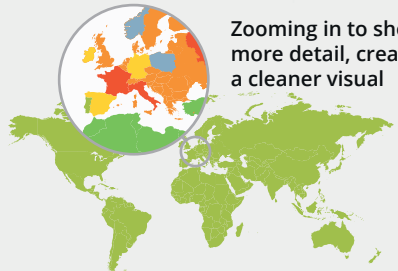
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## USING ANNOTATION

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



Highlight to show more detailed view or comparison to point



Zooming in to show more detail, creates a cleaner visual

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## COLOUR CHOICES

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

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

Length of infographic as required...

Templates with grids are available to help align elements

Use icons from the existing icon library

Contact the Design team for further information

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

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

Extend footer down as required for source list.

[www.ons.gov.uk](http://www.ons.gov.uk)

Sources / methodology . List them across the page until here and then onto the second line = open sans regular 10pt

# Question your work

## A QUICK CHECKLIST

Use as a quick reference, not as a substitute for following process.

- Double-checked the data is correct?**
- Checked that all the data is visualised correctly?**
- The design follows the visual design rules close enough?**
- Someone else understands the story? (without prior explanation)**
- The design is easy to follow, with all elements aligned?**
- Would additional context help improve the story?**
- Does the title frame the content correctly?**
- Is the story presented self-contained and without bias?**

## CONSIDER DISTRIBUTION

Depending on channel, adjust final infographic for distribution.



### Web

This is the main distribution method. Refer to the ONS web standards and house style guide for publishing on the ONS website.

Always use the dedicated 'infographic' Tridion schema.

For a richer user experience consider publishing in conjunction with other outputs eg short stories. Contact the Editorial Team for further information.



### Social Media

The Social Media team can maximise reach to users utilising a number of digital channels. Infographics may need optimisation, check first.



### Media coverage

The Media Relations team can maximise press coverage both locally and nationally.

For all contact details see back cover.

**For general infographic and editorial queries contact:**  
[idp@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:idp@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

**For design queries contact:**  
[ons.design@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ons.design@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

**For data visualisation queries contact:**  
[datavis@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:datavis@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

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