Your guide for the design, print and distribution of communications materials

1. Introduction

This guide is for HSE staff who need to produce and distribute high-quality print materials.

It will help you to set objectives, source and choose designers and printers and give you information on distribution channels.

If you require additional support it is available from:

- [Local Communications Offices (CHO and Hospital Group)](#)
- [Client Directors](#)
- [National Communications Division](#)

2. Setting objectives

Before you create any materials you should consider your purpose, and what you are trying to achieve. It is good to consider if a print job is the right medium for you to communicate what you want to communicate. The design, print and distribution process can take a lot of time and it can be expensive. Are there any more convenient and cheaper ways to communicate your message? Would an email or a web page be as effective?

You will also need to consider a number of things, including:

- who your audience are
- how you will reach your audience
- budget
- distribution

See Appendix A for a full pre-printing checklist.

3. Before you start

It is important to identify who your target audience is. Find out:

- Gender
- Age
- Location
- Culture

- Behaviours
- Interests

This will help decide what communications channels you should use to reach them. You will also need to identify how you will let your audience know that the resource exists.

When starting to write your content, it is very helpful to think about the impact you want it to have. Think about what you want the reader to do, think, know or feel after they have read your material. This can help to produce a more helpful product for the reader.

Communicating clearly

Before engaging the services of designers or printers, you should review your content. Content is the headlines, text and any imagery you're using.

When writing and editing the content, keep your audience in mind. All communications from the HSE must follow our 'Guidelines for Communicating Clearly using Plain English with our Patients and Service Users'. This is a helpful guide produced for all HSE services, and takes you through the process of writing and editing in detail.

Hemingway Editor is a useful online proofreading tool to check if your content is using plain English. The tool gives your content a readability score; try and ensure that the readability score of all HSE public information is Grade 4.

National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)

For some external documents, you can get NALA to review the content for readability and suitability for the audience. There is a charge for this service. You can contact NALA on 01 412 7900 or literacy@nala.ie for a quote.

NALA can also review a document when it is designed but if you want them to review text, you should send it to them in a word document and before it goes to a designer so that they can review it easily.

The more amendments with the designer, the higher the cost.

Content pre-quote checklist

Use the content pre-quote checklist in Appendix B to help check that you have considered the plain English requirements for your resources.

4. Writing a brief

You will need to create a brief for the designer and printer. This will help ensure your objectives are met. See Appendix C for a template you can use to brief.

You will need to send the brief to every vendor you ask for a quote from. Take note of the procurement processes also; there is more on this in the next section.

You can also provide the vendors of examples of similar styles or materials that you like.

5. Getting and assessing quotes

The [HSE's Financial Regulations](#) set out the following requirements:

Cost under €5000	Engage one vendor directly
Cost from €5000 to €25,000	Get 3-5 competitive quotes
Cost over €25,000	Tender process or use Digital / Creative Framework Agencies

All values above exclude VAT. If you are unsure if the cost will be under €5000, you can engage with one vendor. If their quote is above this amount, you must request a minimum of three quotes in writing.

Please note that quotes often don't include VAT so you must take this into consideration for your budget. It is also important to check if there are any delivery costs for delivering the printed materials to you. See Appendix D for ballpark costs for printed items.

Design costs often include three rounds of amendments – it is important to check this is included for the quotes received.

Assessing quotes and choosing a supplier

Review each of the proposals received. Consider the timeframe, costs, quality, previous experience and any references or examples provided. See an evaluation template in Appendix E.

It might be worthwhile to have more than one person available to review proposals. Each person could review the submissions on their own initially and then discuss as a group. Keep a record of your decision.

Email all vendors who sent quotes, informing them of your decision. Arrange for the budget holder to raise a PO and confirm with the selected vendor that you want to proceed. You may need to set the vendor up as a new supplier with the HSE.

6. Design and print process

When you receive the document from the designer, there is a design review checklist you can use in Appendix F.

You will liaise back and forth with the designer on revised drafts. Keep in mind that your quote may only include three sets of revisions.

If you wish to have the document reviewed by NALA, you could send them a near-finalised copy that has been designed. This will add more time to the process so make sure to agree a timeline with NALA for feedback.

Follow the HSE's Brand Guidelines and give the link, www.hse.ie/branding, to your designer to ensure the HSE's logo and any other branding or logos are used correctly on your document. The guidelines also provide information on fonts and layouts of various types of publications.

Once you have final sign-off on the designed document, the designer will create a file ready for print. The designer can liaise with the printer (if they are different vendors).

Ask the designer to provide you with a PDF version of the document that you can upload onto hse.ie and other relevant websites.

7. Distribution and promotion

Your materials need to be stored and/ or distributed to your target audience and it's important that the right channels are used.

You'll also need to develop a promotional plan that will let people know about your resources and encourage them to use them. It's important to consider internal communications so that colleagues across the HSE are aware of the materials. Channels for promotion could include a broadcast email, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and through third parties.

Broadcast emails are distributed by HSE Internal Communications. You can contact the team at internalcomms@hse.ie to schedule your broadcast mail. Please give at least one week's notice.

To request use of HSE Social Media channels, please contact digital@hse.ie.

If you are planning on distributing the materials yourself, you will need to ensure you have capacity to store the printed materials.

The HSE has a contracted service for storage and distribution of larger-scale communications materials to the public and our services and healthcare providers. The service includes an online ordering service, accessed through the HSE's healthpromotion.ie website.

This service is provided by Store-All for a fee, which must be paid from your budget. They can also store the materials before they are distributed. You may need to set up an account with Store-All for invoicing purposes.

You must complete Store-All forms in order to receive stock codes to ensure materials can be ordered on healthpromotion.ie. You must also ensure that the printer has Store-All delivery instructions.

For all information relating to account set up and the National Storage and Distribution contract please contact susan.broderick@hse.ie

8. Further information

This guide is designed to provide help and guidance for any communications materials you may be looking to create. If you have any additional questions or any feedback, please contact the Programmes & Campaigns team at campaigns@hse.ie.

Appendix A: Pre-printing checklist

Checklist	Tick
I know that there is no other printed material that already exists that could meet my need	
My objectives for my printed item are clear	
I know who my audience is	
I know how to get my printed materials to the audience that needs them	
I know how many I need to print	
I know my budget and have the approval of the budget holder	
I have agreed a sign off procedure for my printed item	
I have a clear, realistic and agreed timeline for this project	
I am aware of HSE branding guidelines available on www.hse.ie/branding and any partner/ local branding requirements	

If you can tick all the boxes, you're ready to move onto the next step. Please use this guide to get you started.

If you're unsure about any of the above or you need help, you can contact your local Communications personnel or a member of the Programmes and Campaigns team.

Appendix B: Content pre-quote checklist

Checklist	Tick
I have reviewed my content and am sure that it is written in Plain English	
I have checked it against the Communicating Clearly Guidelines and checklists	
I believe it is clear from the readers point of view	
I have consulted with all relevant experts / partners who need to see the content	
I have decided if it needs to be reviewed by NALA or not and received a quote from NALA if so	
I have factored NALA amends into my timeline	

Appendix C: Writing the brief template

Campaign overview	What is the objective of the campaign?
What is the purpose of the printed item?	What is the objective of the document? What is the key message that will make people want to take away?
Target audience	Who do you want to use the document? What will this audience learn from reading the document? Do you have a distribution plan? What channels will you use to promote the document? Do these channels line up with where the audience are? What other ways can you communicate the message? Where else can the audience find this information?
Timeframe for printing	Specify when you need the document by Have you allowed enough time for proofing and edits to the document?
Spec needed for design company	• Full colour or black and white? (Full colour is more expensive) • Paper size, e.g. A4, A5, DL • Number of pages • Finish – matt, silk or gloss? A matt finish allows people to write on the materials • Paper weight – suggest 130gsm for inside pages and 300gsm for cover; suggest 180gsm for leaflets • Binding – staples, saddle stitch or glued? The printer can advise as this depends on the number of pages • Quantity for printing • Delivery of materials – include details of where the printed materials should be delivered. Quotes should include any delivery charges • Changes – the quote should include three round of changes • Deadline – specify the deadline that the work needs to be completed by
Images and charts	Are images needed? If so, what style – using real photos, stock imagery or animated images? There may be an additional cost to this but your supplier can advise. If using photos, do you have consent from the people in the images? Do you have examples of images you would like used? Are there tables or charts in the document? Do they require a specific

	layout?
Deliverables by HSE	Provide HSE branding guidelines (and any other guidelines)
	Consider the colour scheme you want (in line with any branding)
	Ensure you have the copyright of photos and content
	Provide details of delivery/ distribution of materials
Mandatories	Is there anything that must be included? For example logos or colours
Budget	You can specify a budget or seek a quote
	Make sure to specify if the budget is inclusive of VAT
Specifics	Include any additional information that is necessary for the vendors

Appendix D: Ballpark costs for printed items

Item	Quantity	Ballpark cost
A5 flyer		
	1,000	€100
	5,000	€180
	10,000	€260
6 page DL Flyer		
	1,000	€130
	5,000	€190
	10,000	€470
4 page A5 Flyer		
	1,000	€130
	5,000	€190
	10,000	€470
A3 poster		
	100	€55
	500	€230
	1,000	€265
56 page report plus cover		
Cover on 300gsm card. Inside pages on 160gsm.	500	€2,150
	1,000	€2,600

Print costs can vary greatly from one supplier to another.

Design is usually charged separately and by the hour. You should also be aware that if you go over the agreed number of changes, you will incur additional costs.

Appendix E: Evaluation Template

Sample criteria and marking scheme

	Company A	Company B	Company C
Cost (60%)			
Relevant experience (20%)			
Timeframe for delivery (20%)			
Total			

Appendix F: Design review template

The design meets the brief	
The design enhances the clarity of the content provided	
All relevant logos are in place and in the correct order	
The font is correct	
Proofread	
Consult with the budget holder	
Send or talk through any changes with designer and await a revised draft	