



## Web Content Guidelines for Lawsociety.ie

These guidelines are designed to support all staff supplying content for use on lawsociety.ie.

If you have any query about these guidelines, please contact [Derek Owens](#).

### Who to contact

Please submit content for lawsociety.ie in Word format (.docx or .doc) to [Derek Owens](#).

Content for the Intranet should be submitted to [Elizabeth Flynn](#).

If either Derek Owens or Elizabeth Flynn are unavailable, and your request is time-sensitive, contact [webmaster@lawsociety.ie](mailto:webmaster@lawsociety.ie) and it will be assigned to a member of the team.

### Essential elements

Each piece of content on the site or Member eZine has three essential elements:

- Headline (ideally five words or less),
- Introduction (summarising the article contents in 10 words or less), and
- Main body.

### Making web content digestible

Our eyes read content on a screen more slowly than on the printed page, making it harder to digest. However, a few quick tricks can make a real difference.

- Put the most critical information at the top.
- Use frequent sub-headers, so a reader 'scanning' your content knows where to look. If your content is necessarily very long, 'anchor links' can be added within the page so readers can access the section relevant to them quickly
- Break up paragraphs where possible. Ideally, each paragraph should be two or three sentences in length.
- Break up long lists with bullet points.
- Be sparing in use of jargon – especially if the content will be consumed by nonlawyers. If it is impossible to avoid jargon, use the intro text to explain the content in layman's terms. This is also critical for SEO purposes.



- Bold essential words, such as deadlines, if you need to highlight them. Avoid underlined text (mistaken for links), capitals, or italics except when referring to legislation.
- Use a bullet pointed 'call to action' where you wish the reader to download a document, complete a form, apply for a course, etc.
- Be as clear as possible about the destination of links (eg, say 'View Revenue guidance' rather than 'Click here').
- Avoid putting text within an image – for example, supply a table in text format rather than as an image. This is important for SEO and for accessibility purposes.
- Remember the Law Society's [Tone of Voice guidelines](#).

### Spelling, grammar, and usability conventions

- **Abbreviations** are 'introduced' at the instance of their first use – eg Legal Services Regulatory Authority (LSRA) – and can be used throughout the content thereafter.
- **Ampersands** are used only for 'proper nouns' (eg Complaints & Client Relations Committee, but not mental health & wellbeing).
- **Bold** font is used sparingly for emphasis.
- **Bullet-points** are a great way to make long lists or calls to action stand out, but it's easy for inconsistencies to creep in.
  - **Bullet pointed lists** are punctuated by commas or semicolons (if the individual list items are very long) up until the final point, which ends in a full stop.
  - **Calls to action** (eg a prompt to book a course) are bullet pointed, with no punctuation.
- **Capitalisation** is used sparingly, for 'proper nouns': named institutions or individuals. They are not used to add emphasis.
- **Cases** are referenced as 'party v party [2021]', with a link to the relevant judgment where available. OSCOLA or other citations are usually only used where the specific case is likely to be unfamiliar to those reading the content.
- **Dates** are presented as 'day month year' (eg 9 February 2021).
- **Documents**, if produced by the Law Society, must conform to the [Brand Guidelines](#). Staff can access a range of [template documents](#), or design services for bespoke documents.
- **Italics** are used for legislation but avoided otherwise for readability purposes.
- **Legislation** is italicised, with links to individual provisions used where this is likely to be needed by the reader.
- **Numbers** are spelled out up to nine, with numbers used from 10 on.
- **Times** are used in 12 hour clock format, with a space between the number and 'am/pm' – eg 9.00 pm.