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Make this section clear so that the reader is able to go straight to the part which is most relevant to them. The sections below should be included. If there are a lot of proposals split these into chapters

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Foreword

Some consultations will have a Ministerial Foreword. This would set out the aims of the consultation and the 'voice' of the Minister.

Executive Summary

This should preferably be no longer than two pages. It should set out what the document is aiming to do. It should provide enough information so that the reader can decide whether they need to read the rest of the document. The executive summary of the consultation document should be put on the website separately from the main document so that interested parties do not have to download a large document unless it is relevant to them.

Even if the rest of the document necessarily uses technical language the executive summary should minimise this to make it as accessible as possible.

It is helpful to state what stage the policy development is at, and make clear which parts of the policy they can influence. If there are things that cannot be changed make this clear too.

If a Regulatory Impact Assessment is attached draw the reader's attention to it in this section.

If the consultation is running for less than 12 weeks state the reason for this, and state what specific measures have been taken to ensure that consultation is as effective as possible.

How to Respond

In this section draw the readers' attention to the consultation questions within the document.

You should also state

- The dates that the consultation is running and the last date for responses.
- Who to send the responses to- this should be a named individual and should give a telephone number, fax number and e-mail address.
- If the response is from an organisation, who that organisation represents.
- What other forms of consultation are running alongside the written consultation exercise and how to get involved in these
- How to obtain extra copies of the consultation paper
- How the responses will be used

- Who to complain to if you are not happy about the way the consultation is being run- this will be the consultation co-ordinator for your department.
- The consultation criteria should be reproduced in all consultation documents. Explicitly state that the consultation should abide by these criteria. Encourage respondents to complain if they feel the criteria have not been followed. Explicitly state who to contact if respondents have comments or complaints about the consultation process. This should be someone outside of the team running the consultation and is likely to be the Consultation Co-ordinator for the department

Suggest Text

The consultation period began on (date) and will run until (date), please ensure that your response reaches us by that date. If you would like further copies of this consultation document it can be found at (web address) or you can contact (name). Please send consultation responses to

Name

Address

Phone number

Fax number

Email address

When responding please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. If responding on behalf of a larger organisation please make it clear who the organisation represents, and where applicable, how the views of members were assembled.

There will be alternative consultation events on (dates). If you would be interested in attending these events, please contact xx.

'A list of those consulted is attached at xx. If you have any suggestions of others who may wish to be involved in this process please contact us.

The information you send us may need to be passed to colleagues within insert your department [and/or] published in a [summary of responses] received in response to this consultation (*along with a response from the Government*) **We will assume that you are content for us to do this, and that if you are replying by e-mail, your consent overrides any confidentiality disclaimer that is generated by your organisation's IT system, unless you specifically include a request to the contrary in the main text of your submission to us.**

Please ensure that if you want your name or response to be kept confidential, you state this clearly in your response. (*Confidential responses will be included in any statistical summary of numbers of comments received and views expressed.*)

Consultation Questions

List the consultation questions at the beginning of the document so that people can refer back to them quickly.

If an RIA is attached ask respondents to look at this. Ask them to comment on the analysis of costs and benefits. Ask them to suggest any alternatives to regulation, possible unintended consequences and practical enforcement or implementation issues.

Suggested text

The Regulatory Impact Assessment can be found at annexe x. When responding to the consultation please comment on the analysis of costs and benefits, giving supporting evidence wherever possible.

Please also suggest any alternative methods for reaching the objective and highlight any possible unintended consequences of the policy, and practical enforcement or implementation issues.

The Proposals

Break up the text with headings where appropriate

Put the questions in a shaded box within the text so that they stand out but are in context.

Think about the kind of responses that you want from the consultation. Closed question will give you a yes/no response, which can be useful in some circumstances and are easy to analyse. More open questions will lead to much more detailed responses and will need careful analysis. ([see Questions in written consultation documents](#))

What will Happen Next

Let the reader know what will happen when the consultation period is over. You need to state where, and when the summary of responses/government response to consultation will be published. This will usually be on a website with paper copies made available on request.

Let the reader know the expected timing for the policy development including highlighting any further planned consultations.

Suggested Text

A summary of responses, including the next steps will be published by (date) on (web address), paper copies will be available on request.

Question and Answer Brief

This gives you the opportunity to address any issues which you think a reader may have about the proposals once they have read the document.

It is useful here to include a contact name and number that the respondent can ring if they need clarification.

Provide a web address where the respondent can access relevant background information.

Suggested text

Below is a list of frequently asked questions about these proposals. If you still have questions after you have read this section please contact;

Name

Address

Phone Number

Fax

E-mail address

Further background information can be found at (web address)

Regulatory Impact Assessment

If the policy is likely to have an effect on business, charities or the voluntary sector an RIA must be completed and attached to the consultation document
Link to guidance

The Consultation Criteria

The consultation criteria should be published in all consultation documents.
Suggested wording:

The consultation is being conducted in line with the Code of Practice on Consultation. The Criteria are listed below. The full version can be accessed at <http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/Consultation/Code.htm>

(The Six Consultation Criteria

- 1. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.**

2. **Be clear about who may be affected, what questions are being asked, and the timescale for responses.**
3. **Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.**
4. **Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.**
5. **Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.**
6. **Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.**

If you feel that the consultation does not satisfy these criteria please contact

Name

Address

Telephone number

E-mail address

List of Those Consulted

Please attach a list of all of those who you are consulting, this allows others to pick up organisations which may have been missed.