

Kind

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We act with kindness and in a way that values people, their insights, situations and experiences.

So when we write, we sound warm and human to show we care.

Being kind isn't just a fluffy 'nice to have'. It has a powerful effect on your reader.

In a [study from 2002](#), psychologist Nalini Ambady found that surgeons who didn't sound sympathetic in conversations with patients were sued five times more often than those who did.

Say 'we' and 'you'

It feels more personal and friendly than talking about 'the NMC' or 'registrants'.

Use contractions

Like 'can't' instead of 'cannot', or 'we'll' instead of 'we will'.

Studies show that contractions help people understand. And too much 'should not', 'do not' etc can sound old-fashioned and distant.

Even the government website, www.gov.uk, uses them. So we can and should use them too. Just don't overdo it, especially if you're writing a formal letter or document. There's a list of contractions we do and don't use in our style guide.

Avoid old-fashioned words and legalese

Take a look at the words on the left. They're cold and formal, and make life harder for readers - particularly if they aren't fluent in English. Use the more everyday alternatives on the right instead:

notify	tell
inform	tell
request	ask
remain	stay
whilst	while
consider	think
conduct	do
undertake	do
require	need

Use verbs, not nouns

Formal, legal writing uses a lot of nouns. But verbs are easier to understand. So avoid 'the management of' when you could say 'managing'. Or 'following registration' when 'after you register' is clearer.

Say sorry sincerely

Avoid phrases like, 'We would like to apologise' and 'we apologise if' - they can sound like a non-apology. 'We're sorry' is more genuine.

But only apologise if it's our fault - you don't have to say sorry for things that are beyond our control (like the law, for example).