

# Style Guide for *Waltham Forest Echo*

The following guide indicates the style to be used across all *Waltham Forest Echo* publications; as a reference for words, terms and the application of punctuation, capital letters and abbreviations when they have many potential executions. For unambiguous spelling and grammar usage, please refer to the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

**Abbreviations/Acronyms:** Unless very famous (e.g. *BBC*) write in full first time, followed by the acronym in brackets. Only capitalise letters that form the acronym. E.g. first write *Royal Society for the Protection of Birds*, then just write *RSPB*. If the acronym is commonly read as a word, only capitalise the first letter (e.g. *Asbo*).

**Addresses:** Include comma. E.g. *Hainault Road, Leytonstone*. When using full address there is no comma before the postcode. When writing an address, someone is *of* a road, not *from* a road. E.g. *Jammy Dodger of Hoe Street, Walthamstow E17 6RV*. Equally, something is *in* a road, not *on* a road. E.g. *Big Church, in God Street*.

**Age:** Should be given as: *Freddy Blogger, 25, of Station Road, Chingford*. It is *year-old* with a hyphen, or *years old* without. E.g. *12 years old*, or *a 12-year-old*. Note: 'under-fives' and 'under-16s'.

**Ampersand:** Use only when part of a company's official name, E.g. *B&Q*.

**Apostrophes:** For use in abbreviations (e.g. *don't*) and possessives, except when used in acronyms. E.g. *MPs*, or periods of time such as *the 1970s*.

**Artist:** The name of an artist, collective or band should be capitalised but not italicised.

**As:** Not a substitute for *because*. E.g. *I crossed the road as I wanted a muffin* should read *I crossed the road because I wanted a muffin*. Similarly, 'as' does not mean 'when'.

**Breeds:** Not capped, unless there is a geographical element. E.g. *Labrador, Siamese cat, Yorkshire terrier, pitbull*.

**Capitals:** Use caps for proper nouns only, such as names, titles, places, organisations and institutions, but not to council committees or jobs. So lower case for mayor and councillor, unless used as an official title to introduce someone. E.g. *The London mayor is visiting Leyton* and *Mayor of London Boris Johnson visited Leyton* are both correct uses. Also see **Titles**. For published artwork (including music, literature, film etc.) cap up every word. E.g. *Stay Another Day*. Also see **Publications**.

**Co-:** Hyphenate co-operate, co-opt, co-ordinate but note uncooperative and uncoordinated.

**Colons:** Should be followed by a capital letter, whether used for quotes or not.

**Collective nouns:** Singular. E.g. *The council is*, or *The company has*. Exceptions include pop groups and sports teams. E.g. *Ipswich Town are the greatest football team the world has ever seen*. The police are, a couple are, a family are; but the Met Police is.

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**Commas:** Use sparingly. Generally used for lists or to break up long sentences. But shorter sentences with fewer commas are preferred.

**Companies:** Leave out plc, Ltd.

**Compared:** Compared with, not to.

**Compass:** Points of the compass should be in lower case as in north, south, east and west unless a specific place, E.g. *East London*.

**Contractions:** Do not use *don't*, *won't*, *isn't* etc. unless in quotes.

**Councils:** First mention in full: E.g. *Waltham Forest Council*, subsequently use *the council*, unless multiple councils are mentioned in the story.

**Councillors:** Write in full first time using *Councillor* with a capital letter but subsequently use first name, as normal. If mentioning party and ward, write *Councillor Chris Robbins, a Labour member for Grove Green*.

**Court:** Capitalise the name of the court for a first mention, subsequently *crown court*, *magistrates' court*, or *Waltham Forest magistrates*.

**Crime:** People do not *have* things stolen, E.g. *A man had his bag stolen by two thieves* is incorrect. Instead write: *A man's bag was stolen by two thieves*.

**Dates:** The *50s* or *1950s*. No apostrophe. Date style is *Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> September 2015*. Also write *new year* without capitals but write *New Year's Eve* or *Bank Holiday Monday* when referring to a specific date.

**Despite:** Not in spite of.

**Different:** From, not *different to* or *different than*.

**Diseases:** Cap up according to the dictionary. E.g. *Alzheimer's disease*, *lung cancer*

**Doctors:** Qualified doctors should be referred to as *Dr*, as should professors. If the story relates to their profession, subsequent mentions should use the title and first name, e.g. *Dr Phil*.

**Drugs:** No capitals for names of drugs or medications unless they are brand names.

**Due to:** Refers to timing only, when things are *due to* arrive. Do not use instead of *because*. E.g. *Everyone died due to Tony*, should be *Everyone died because of Tony*.

**Earth:** Capitalise only when used as a pronoun. E.g. *The planet Earth is dying*.

**Elections:** Capitalise the name of a specific election. E.g. *2015 General Election*, but lower case otherwise, e.g. *The local election was rigged*.

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**Felt:** When writing about a thought process, write *believed* or *thought*, not *felt*. E.g. *Residents believed Tony should have been locked away.*

**Firefighters:** Use as one word, or *fire crew* as two words, but not *firemen*.

**Focused, focuses, focusing:** All have one 's'.

**Full stops:** Are not used after abbreviations (mph, Dr) but generally used for Latin terms such as *etc.*, *e.g.*, *i.e.*.

**Government:** Never capped, but specific areas of government should be capitalised. E.g. *The government is ...*, and *The Ministry of Defence is full of ...*.

**God:** Cap up when referring to the specific God of Christianity fame, in the same way as you would cap up *Jesus Christ* or *Allah*. Lower case for a reference to god in its general context.

**Honours:** These are made twice a year, in the Birthday Honours and the New Year Honours and when a prime minister leaves office. You are made an OBE or MBE, not awarded one, and you do not receive one. Do not use as letters after a name.

**Hyphens:** Use to join two words that together form an adjective or adverb. E.g. *The trigger-happy police officer*. But no hyphen when two distinct adverbs/adjectives. E.g. *A deep, dark hole*. Also use to clarify meaning. *Sweet-shop girl* and *sweet shop-girl* mean different things. Only hyphenate prefixes if double 'e' or 'o'. E.g. *re-export*, *re-election*, *co-operative*. No hyphen in *reassess*, *redevelop* or *reopen*. Note the difference between using two words as a noun, e.g. *make-up*, and using two words as a verb clause, e.g. *they should make up*.

**Inquests:** A coroner records a verdict and a jury returns a verdict.

**Knighthoods:** *Sir Bruce Forsyth*, then *Sir Bruce*. *Dame Judi Dench*, then *Dame Judi*.

**Listed buildings:** The style is *Grade II listed*.

**Measurements:** When being exact (e.g. *2ft 3in*, or *8lbs 3oz*) always write with digits and abbreviations. When being general (e.g. *about two feet tall*, or *he weighed twelve stone*, or *50 miles to Tipperary*) write numbers as normal (see **numbers**) and measurement spelling in full. Write measurement in full on first use when appropriate (e.g. *25 litres*, but not *75 miles-per-hour*), and abbreviate for subsequent use (*25l*). Never spell a number when using abbreviated measurements (e.g. *3km*, not *three km*).

**Money:** Style is £31.95. If the number is in the millions or billions, write in full first time and without spaces. E.g. *£64million*. For subsequent use write *£64m* or *£1bn* for billion. If using approximate figures, do not use £. E.g. *My cat is worth tens of thousands of pounds*.

**Names:** In full first, first name subsequently. E.g. *John Smith*, then *John*. This rule can be flexible, particularly for famous people, when it would be odd to refer to David Cameron as *David* rather than *Cameron* or *the PM*. Also see **Titles**.

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**No-one:** Hyphenated.

**Numbers:** Spell out one to twelve, then figures for 13 and above. Spell out twenties, fifties, hundreds, thousands etc. when writing in general, rather than specific terms. E.g. *BP stuffed the leaking oil well with rolled fifties*. Use commas in amounts of 1,000 and above. Write fractions in full with hyphens. E.g. *One-third*. If you must start a sentence with a number spell it out, e.g. *Thirty*. Use *about*, rather than *around*, when describing approximate numbers. Write *more than 100 people*, not *over 100 people* and *fewer than 100 people* not *less than 100 people*.

**Okay:** Do not use OK. Okay?

**On to:** Is two separate words. Avoid *onto*.

**Only:** Put it in front of the word it qualifies. E.g. *He waited only three weeks*, not *He only waited three weeks*.

**Organisations:** An *it*, not a *they*. E.g. *Tesco has built its new superstore adjacent to Stonehenge*, not *Tesco have built their new superstore adjacent to Stonehenge*.

**Over:** Not a substitute for *more than* or *during*. E.g. *During the Christmas period*, not *Over the Christmas period*.

**Paragraphs:** Try to keep to less than 50 words per paragraph. Do not use line breaks in-between paragraphs.

**Parliament:** Cap as in *Houses of Parliament* but lower case for *parliamentary*.

**Percentages:** Always write *percent*, rather than using % or *per cent*.

**Post Office:** Caps for the organisation and *Walthamstow Post Office*, but lower case for *the town's post office*.

**Public houses:** Lower case, e.g. *The Warrant Officer pub*.

**Publications:** All artistic or academic material that is published should have its title italicised (as well as being capitalised). E.g. *OK Computer*, *Great Expectations*, *Waltham Forest Echo*, *The Matrix*, *Bohemian Rhapsody*, *Mona Lisa* etc. However, the name of an artist, author or organisation is never italicised.

**Qualifications:** GCSEs, A-levels and BA honours.

**Quotes:** Use double quote marks for all direct speech. For full sentences in quotes, introduce with a colon. When quoting someone for the first time, use their name before the quote begins. For quotes inside quotes use single quote marks and for clarification use square brackets. E.g. *Nick Clegg said: "I couldn't believe it when David [Cameron] said 'I want to move to Jamaica'."* Full stops or commas precede a closing quote mark, unless the phrase has been isolated within a normal paragraph. E.g. *The mayor said it was "absolutely massive", but no-one knew what she was referring to.*

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**Religion:** Names of religions take caps, as do their holy books and their gods. E.g. *Muslim, Allah* and *Koran*.

**Royalty:** Lower case for royal household and royal family, but cap up for individual royal names. E.g. *The Queen, Prince of Wales*. Do not use *Her Majesty*.

**Scouts:** Not gender specific. They are scouts, cubs, beavers, guides and brownies, except when used in the name of a group. E.g. *7<sup>th</sup> Walthamstow Scouts*.

**Stations:** Upper case. If it is a tube station only, use *Leyton Underground Station*.

**Tax:** All taxes are lower case except when abbreviated, E.g. *VAT*.

**Tenses:** Use active not passive. *The boy shot the cat*, not *the cat was shot by the boy*.

**That:** This word is often unnecessary and superfluous. Only use when crucial to making the sentence work. To differentiate between *that* and *which*, decide whether or not the subject is crucial to the sentence. E.g. *The organisation that was set up to combat poverty is launching a new homelessness project* and *The organisation, which was set up five years ago, is going to launch a new homelessness project*.

**Time:** Use *4pm* not *four o'clock*, *from 2.30-4pm*, but *between 3 and 4pm*. Do not say *11-12am* or *11-12pm*, say *11am-noon* or *11pm-midnight*.

**Titles:** Only use a title if someone is professionally qualified or elected. So no Mr/Mrs, but do use Dr (doctor), MP (Member of Parliament), Cllr (councillor), Rev (reverend), Sgt (sergeant), Col (colonel). On first mention of a police officer, military figure, or religious authority, refer to the full job title using upper case on first mention. E.g. *Detective Inspector Pedro Alvares*, then subsequently *DI Alvares*. For the House of Lords use only Lord or Lady before their name. If a job does not come with a title, do not cap up the job. E.g. *Kelmscott School headteacher John Meadows*. Also see **Names**.

**Trade names:** Use only where appropriate. They include: *Biro, Dictaphone, Elastoplast, Fibreglass, Formica, Hoover, Optic, Photostat, Polaroid, Sellotape, Tipp-Ex, Thermos, Walkman*.

**Wars:** *First World War* and *Second World War*. Capitalise if the name of the war is officially recognised. The 'War on Terror' is a collective for the NATO-led campaign in the Middle East, but the 'Iraq War' is also applicable to the country. If a war is currently taking place and its name is not commonly recognised, use lower case in the description. E.g. *The war in Gaza*.

**Word endings:** Avoid *whilst, amongst* etc. Use *while, among*. Avoid *burnt, dreamt* etc. Use *burned, dreamed*.

**World:** Lower case except in *Western World* and *Third World*.

**Years:** 2006/7 for one-year gap, but 1999-2007 for longer periods

**Z:** Never use 'z' in words that end in 'ise'. E.g. *recognise*, not *recognize*.