

Scottish Government style guide

Words to avoid

We aim to use Plain English as much as possible on gov.scot. Here are some suggestions for words to avoid:

- agenda (unless it's for a meeting)
- advancing
- collaborate (use working with)
- combating
- commit/pledge (we need to be more specific - we're either doing something or we're not)
- countering
- deliver (pizzas, post and services are delivered - not abstract concepts like improvements or priorities)
- deploy (unless it's military or software)
- dialogue (we speak to people)
- disincentivise (and incentivise)
- empower
- facilitate (instead, say something specific about how you're helping)
- focusing
- foster (unless it's children)
- impact (do not use this as a synonym for have an effect on, or influence)
- initiate
- key (unless it unlocks something. A subject/thing is not key - it's probably important)
- land (as a verb only use if you're talking about aircraft)
- lever or leverage (unless in the financial sense)
- liaise
- overarching
- progress (as a verb - what are you actually doing?)
- promote (unless you're talking about an ad campaign or some other marketing promotion)
- robust
- slimming down (processes do not diet)
- streamline
- strengthening (unless it's strengthening bridges or other structures)
- tackling (unless it's rugby, football or some other sport)
- transforming (what are you actually doing to change it?)
- utilise