

Writing and Delivering Effective Briefings

Overview

This workshop is designed to help teams develop their skills and confidence in providing briefings, either in writing or orally. It will be delivered face-to-face, and will comprise a mix of guidance, discussion and practical exercises.

Workshop objectives

The workshop's aims are to enable participants to:

- understand the different contexts for which they provide briefings;
- understand the needs of their various audiences and be able to plan and produce concise, clear and useful briefings for them;
- recognise the components of an effective briefing and how to structure it;
- develop their own briefing skills and confidence;
- develop an approach to delivering an oral briefing; and
- be able to choose what to include in a briefing – and what to leave out – to ensure focus and impact, and enable them to produce a briefing in a short period of time.

Agenda

11.00 Welcome and introductions

Establishing how the workshop will work and what it will cover. Individual learning goals.

11.20 The context of written briefings: group discussion

Why briefings matter, how they are used and how they add value to your work

11.40 A framework for planning, writing and editing written briefings: tutor-led discussion and guidance

Introducing a structured approach to planning, writing and improving briefings. We will explore each element in some detail so that participants can develop the necessary skills to be able to write concise, useful and timely briefings that meet their audiences' needs.

The framework will help participants to know how to get started on a briefing, how to choose and prioritise its contents, and what the qualities are of effective, clear and impactful writing. We will look at the Minister's perspective and what they need from briefings.

12.30 Lunch Break

13.30 Practical breakout exercise: selecting key points for a briefing

How to approach producing a briefing at short notice. Participants will work in small groups to identify the essential elements they would include in a briefing, drawn from a large quantity of complex information.

14.30 Writing briefings for meetings

How to plan and write briefings for Ministers that enable them to understand the expected outcomes from a meeting. How to write lines to take (speaking points) that help to deliver your objectives for a meeting in a strategic and political way.

14.45 Break

15.00 Practical breakout exercise: planning a meeting brief

Participants will work in small groups to draft a meeting brief, including speaking points, and receive constructive feedback.

15.45 Oral briefing

What to consider when asked to attend a meeting with a Minister. How to present yourself and your briefing effectively, confidently and for maximum impact. We will discuss best practice, and participants will have the opportunity to practise their oral briefing skills in a practical exercise.

16.30 Review and final questions

16.45 Close of course